

CHILDREN'S DAY

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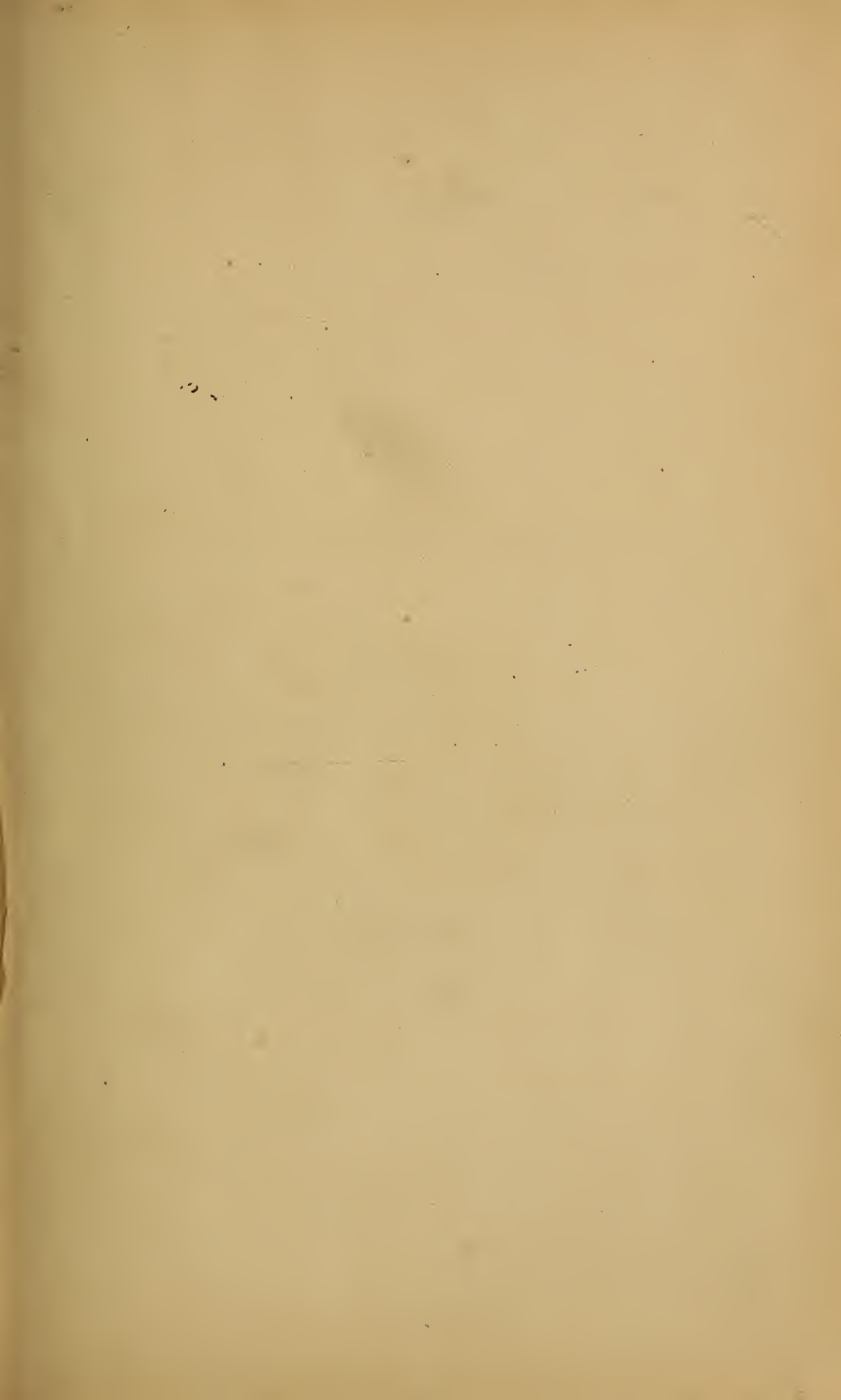


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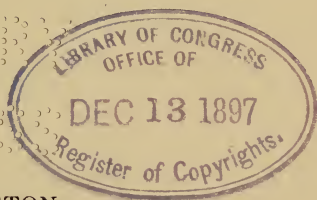
CHILDREN'S DAY

ADDRESSES TO CHILDREN AND PARENTS ON
FAMILIAR SUBJECTS OF LIFE AND DUTY

BY

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TO THE CHILDREN
OF THE
BENEFICENT CHURCH
AND THEIR PARENTS, MANY OF
WHOM WERE CHILDREN WHEN HE FIRST KNEW THEM,
THESE ADDRESSES
ARE AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED
BY THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE

To speak to children when their parents and other friends are present, involves, of necessity, some mingling of discourse to both old and young. While all these addresses were given on Children's Day, some, it will be seen, are largely directed to parents. This is particularly true of the seventh and tenth in the series. In fact, the sympathy of both has been sought, rather than an attempt made to interest or instruct them separately. It is a saying of Marcus Aurelius that, "What is good for the bee is good for the hive," and if there is anything here to help children it cannot be wholly without interest to their elders.

It may be mentioned as a reason for publishing these addresses, that they have met at times the kindly approval of members of the Maternal Association,—a society which has a high place in the author's regard; and it is his earnest hope that the book may occasionally form a starting point for discussions of practical value, and be a help to their meetings.

J. G. V.

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The Value of Restraints

Boys and girls are always looking forward, and if they can only find out what will be good for them when they grow up, what will help them to the best manhood and womanhood, that is the thing that they ought to wish now.

The restraints of early life are likely to make the best men and women. I think I can explain very easily what these restraints are.

First of all, the restraints of home. We are not born without parents to care for us, like some of the lower forms of existence,—insects that spring at once into full life and self-support, or butterflies that burst their chrysalis and know no teaching or guidance from others. The little child is born into a home, which, while it protects, also restrains. We cannot have the one without the other. The house has its door and its blinds, its locks and its bolts. When we fasten it up for the night, there is not only a desire for security but a pleasurable

feeling of snugness and private affection that shuts us in from all the world.

Some of us remember very well what it is to be homesick. When sent away to school, or even to visit among friends, a strange feeling has come over us that is unlike almost anything else, a sort of faintness at the heart and heavy weight on us, that make it seem almost impossible for us to live away from home. It is a feeling common in other nations beside our own. The Germans call it "*heimweh*," and it is sometimes so keen a pang among the Swiss that people have been known to die from it.

The attachments of home would not amount to much without the restraints. The child learns to love his home, because he is obliged to stay in it so much of the time. It is his shelter from the storm, his resting-place by night; it is there he sits at the table, and by the evening lamp; it is there he has his early plays, and the little store of toys and books that he calls his own. In a true home he cannot go out and in entirely at his own pleasure, but must obey the rules of the house for rising and going to bed, for eating and coming home for the night.

The little fellow beginning to walk is protected against certain dangers. He finds a gate at the head of the stairs which he does n't like at first, but if it happens to be left open by accident and he tumbles down the stairs to the bottom, the use of a gate begins to get into his head.

So it is with other restraints that are more important. He must be bathed at proper times and have clean hands at the table; he must have his hair combed, though it hurts sometimes, and the girls find the tangles grow while they are asleep. There are a good many restraints from the time when a little child is forbidden to touch this and that, to the time when rules are laid down as to books and company and amusements. The home belongs to the family, and each must seek the happiness of all. There is no place so precious if this is done, and no place more miserable if it is lawless. If there is no obedience, or kind words, or forgiveness, or prayer for one another's welfare, home is not home.

The parents find some restraints for themselves. They have to give up a good many things for the common welfare. The mother

often gives up her sleep, and the father, if he is a gentleman and a Christian, takes his share of trouble to make home orderly and happy. It isn't all restraint for the little child, but older members of the family have to consult the general good and restrain both their words and their wishes to benefit and help others. But if the parents were trained in a good home themselves, they know the worth of these restraints. They know that home is not a place where each one does what he has a mind to do, but where each has a mind to do what is sweetest and pleasantest for all the rest. The time to learn this lesson is very early. "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth."

From the restraints of infancy we pass to the restraints of school. The school must have its hours, lessons, laws. The first thing for a good teacher must be to keep order. He may know all the words in the speller and all the rivers in China, and have them all at his tongue's end, but if he cannot govern he is a failure. He does not need to whip, as he thought he did when I went to school, but he must rule with the eye and the voice, and with that power of self-control and determination

which expects obedience and gets it. And the chief benefit that comes to the pupil is in obeying the rules. If he learns to pay attention, to answer promptly, to tell what he knows, to follow the rules of arithmetic exactly, he is growing wiser. He is getting discipline which is better than mere knowledge. There is no use to stay in a school if he cannot get that.

The other day I visited a "Discipline School." Perhaps you do not know what that is. It is a school for boys who will not behave in the regular schools; boys that play truant or refuse to get their lessons, or are unmanageable. Such boys are taken out and put into a school by themselves. There were about twenty-five in this school. I should not have known that they were any different from other boys except that they sat well apart from each other, and there were fewer of them. They had two teachers. The principal, with whom I talked, was a most intelligent and admirable woman. Evidently, the superintendent had given one of the best teachers in town to these boys. She had had experience in some of the highest rooms. She spoke to these boys as pleasantly and politely as if they

had been faultless, and yet she controlled them by a moral force that seemed resistless. I said, "Do you see any hopeful signs in any of these boys?" "Indeed I do," said she, "in all of them. They are doing better all the time, and some have already gone back to the regular schools because of their thoroughly good behavior." It was a lesson to me of intense interest, and one of the best marks of progress in our system of education, that the city is trying to make good boys out of bad boys. I believe in that. I believe there is hope for everybody. The child that learns discipline at school, learns the best thing of all. For that reason many of our schools teach military drill, or at least marching and bodily exercise in some form, that body and mind may work together to the harmony of music, and thus be soothed and strengthened. The child who has learned these restraints, the measure of rhythm, of order, of exactness, has learned a great thing.

The highest restraints of all are those of religion. Conscience begins to work very early. You can see in the eye of a very little fellow that he knows when he is doing wrong, and that he does not feel exactly satisfied about

it. While love is the highest motive, it comes into conflict with will and caprice. Sometimes the girl objects to saying her prayers, or to kneeling down, or folding her hands. While I fully believe what our Saviour says of little children, that "of such is the kingdom of heaven," some of them have a queer way of showing it. They must be taught to obey God as well as love him, and that love is obedience.

The Sabbath is a restraint to children, and they cannot receive its full benefit if this be left out. And here of course parents must keep the Sabbath, if the child is to keep it. There must be some restraint on work and play, and wild and foolish behavior. If the Sabbath at home is quiet, orderly, prepared for beforehand with suitable employments and worship, the child will learn to enjoy it. What do we mean by keeping Sunday? Surely not to make it dull and dreary; but we cannot keep Sunday unless we keep it by some restraints for the good of others, and for what will best refresh both body and soul.

Children may be Christians at any age, but they must begin by obeying God. Even

prayer and reading the Bible are not to be left at haphazard. How do you expect ever to love the Bible? When we begin to read, the words always seem hard to us. There are some names now that are real jaw-breakers to us. There is a verse in the Bible that has all the letters in the alphabet—or all but one. I wonder if you know where it is. I believe it is in Ezra. There are hard words in the Bible, and things hard to understand, but it isn't a very large book, and two or three minutes a day given to it would make you very familiar with it. But even that is a restraint. Some of you think two minutes too much, and put it off till Sunday, and then you forget it.

Sometimes I ask a Sunday-school class,—“Have you read over the lesson?” “No!” Not even that. No one ever learned to love the Bible in that way. No one ever learned to play on the flute or the violin who did n't practise, and practice is a restraint. You know it very well. It is a restraint to pray. Sometimes you are too tired, and sometimes you forget it and you think you will pray when you have more time, and you are afraid somebody will see you. Never mind; Christ

has told us to pray, and we can't get along without prayer, and after a while we shall not be willing to get along without it. Job said, "I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food," and the true Christian feels that he cannot live without reading the Bible and prayer every day. Many Christian duties are restraints. They restrain our words and our actions. Happy the child who accepts them early!

Now I have named three kinds of restraints: Restraints of home, of school, and of religion. How do these restraints benefit us?

They help us by saving us from evils we never should know the meaning of. The life of a child depends on the care of others. Food and clothing, protection from the changes of weather, watching in illness through all the diseases that we have to go through, from the time the babies' teeth begin to come till we are grown up and have some idea of taking care of ourselves,—all these things require laws. The child must submit to them, else it will be bad for him in after years.

Another benefit is that by restraint we get

command of our own powers. "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth." You know what a yoke is for. It is to enable the ox to draw. The great awkward animal could be of no service without a yoke to help him apply his power. The same thing is true of a harness. The horse must be harnessed in some way, and the harness must be strong and well fitted. Sometimes it is too heavy, or it chafes and galls. That is cruel. So a yoke may be too heavy for the child. Some children have to work too long hours in the mill. The yoke is too heavy for them. We ought to pity them, and try to help them by good laws and in other ways.

But we all need some sort of a harness. When a man does faithful work in his business, we say he is in the harness. If he is regular, and obeys the rules and requirements of his trade, we say, "He works well in harness;" otherwise, "He is good for nothing. He kicks out of the traces." Every useful man must know how to work in harness. The armor of a knight used to be called the harness. You will find the word so used in the Bible. The Bible is the best book for the study of language. He who wants to learn

good English, let him study the Bible. We all need to know how to work in harness.

Restraints are good for us, because they help us to go faster and to rise higher. Every child wants to run fast. We want to improve in everything good. Now, that seems a strange thing to say, that we can get ahead faster by restraint, but it is true. How does the engine run forty or sixty miles an hour? By keeping on the track. Suppose the locomotive were to say: "This is pretty hard, to make such a great engine as I am, weighing more than twenty elephants, run always on a narrow track, four feet wide. Why can't I have my liberty?" But the track is as important as the engine. There was a track laid a great many years ago, in the town of Milton, Massachusetts, where my father was born. That was the first track laid in America, and it was laid before locomotives were used. The track was laid to draw granite pillars for the custom house in Boston, by horse power. And afterward locomotives were made to fit the track. A locomotive without a track could not run.

Boys and girls, don't get off the track. Jesus calls it the narrow way. Keep to the

narrow way, if you want to run fast and draw a good load. Keep to the narrow way of truth and honesty and pure thoughts and love to God. Then you will make progress. The engine would never get anywhere if it did not keep on the track.

And I said we could rise higher. We want to get more knowledge, more virtue, more character, more usefulness. You cannot do it without restraint. You cannot learn without toil. You cannot do anything well without patience. You must submit to God and your own conscience, and be taught by wiser people. The foolish boy thinks he knows it all. The girl wants to do as she has a mind to. It is hard to be governed by others and follow where they lead. Yet no one grows up into a happy life but thanks God for the restraints of a good father and mother. The little fellow does not want to be tied down by this rule and that. But if he refuses to obey, and obstinately follows his own will, he will surely come to grief.

Did you ever hear the fable of the kite? It is in poetry and I think you will like it.

“Once on a time a paper kite
Was mounted to a wondrous height,
Where, giddy with its elevation,
It thus expressed self-admiration :
‘ See, how yon crowds of gazing people
Admire my flight above the steeple !
How would they wonder if they knew
All that a kite like me can do !
Were I but free, I ’d take a flight
And pierce the clouds beyond my sight.
But ah ! like a poor prisoner bound,
My string confines me near the ground.
I ’d brave the eagle’s towering wing,
Might I but fly without a string.’
It tugged and pulled, while thus it spoke,
To break the string,—at last it broke.
Deprived at once of all its stay,
In vain it tried to soar away ;
Unable its own weight to bear,
It fluttered downward in the air ;
Unable its own course to guide,
The winds soon plunged it in the tide.
‘ Ah ! foolish kite, thou hadst no wing ;
How couldst thou fly without a string ? ’ ”

Think of it, boys and girls, when tempted to say, “I don’t wish to be tied up to school or home or rules of work or study.” Let us all think of it when we get weary of just

restraints, weary of the laws of God and conscience.

Only one thing more. Be willing to bear the yoke while you are young, and you will know how to govern yourselves when you are older. This is the way to gain true freedom. Our Lord Jesus tells us much about liberty. He has taught freedom to the world. But we are told that he learned obedience by the things that he suffered. He lived a quiet, industrious life with his parents till he was old enough to enter on his great work. This is the true beginning of life. Jesus says, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me." He means the same yoke that he had to bear.

I am very glad that so many young people in this city have begun to serve Christ. The only way is to submit to him, and that means to yield to the restraints of home and school and duty of every sort. Give up your pride and your own will. Do not say like the prodigal, "I want to be my own master." You know where that led to. The only way to be your own master is to obey Christ and yield to every just law.

Never be ashamed to do right. Don't have any false courage. Don't let fool-

ish and wicked people dare you to do wrong, to get into bad habits, to swear, to break the Sabbath. Let them say if they wish to, "You are tied by a string." Remember the kite. Always be bound to what is right and true and you will rise to lofty things. Christ teaches us how to govern ourselves. Our young people are learning this in the Christian Endeavor society. They see that the greatest happiness comes from rules and laws and regularity. You are pledged to nothing except what your conscience requires, what will please God and help one another. These are the things that will give you strength and make your lives worth something and fit you to rise at length with Christ and with all loving hearts who have been a blessing in the world, to a crown of glory.

Building Block Houses

We hear a great deal in the Bible of building towers. Indeed, one of the first things that ever was built was a tower, the tower of Babel. Proud men said, "Let us build a tower that shall reach up to heaven." But they had not counted the cost. They could not do it, and the whole thing came to grief.

Children wish to build a tower that shall reach very high. And they can do it, too, with God's help; and I shall try to show you how. If you look in your Bible, you will find a great many places where towers are spoken of. Men built towers to protect them in war. They built them to overlook vineyards, so that they could see whether harm came to them, and at night the workmen lodged in them. They built towers for watchmen to see over the country afar, and to wave signals from the top. They had no telegraph in those days, so that this was all they could do.

But towers have been used in later times for signals. Haven't you heard of the Old

North Church in Boston, where they waved the lanterns the night that Paul Revere rode out to Concord? That tower was worth remembering, and a great many towers have been.

I am going to tell you of a tower that you all can build that shall reach up to heaven. You are all builders of character. A good character will last forever, and reach up to heaven. A bad one will go to ruin.

Now, what is character? It is what you are; whether you can be trusted; whether you are bound to do right, even when it is unpleasant. The youngest child has some idea of what it is to be good and follow his conscience. Well, we call that character. Nobody knows just what it is till he begins to build it. What will you build it with? Children love to build houses with blocks. You learn a great deal in that way. We want some good, strong blocks at the bottom, some that will stand firmly. That is true also of character. It needs good, strong blocks at the foundation. Listen, and I will tell you what they are.

The first is truth. It seems easy to tell the truth, and yet it is often difficult. It is one of

the clearest signs of our fallen nature that we so often depart from the truth. David says of some people that they never tell the truth. "They go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies." I have heard of some children who tell wrong stories, first in play, then perhaps to conceal a fault, then to make other people admire them. It is very natural to exaggerate, that is, to say a thing is larger than it is; to pretend to know more than we do. When we do wrong, it is very easy to deny or to make it out something different, or to say we did not know it was wrong. And when children begin in this way, they get into a habit of falsehood. They do not call it falsehood, but they know it is not quite true.

And this habit grows on them. We are all made up of habits. It is sometimes said that "Man is a bundle of habits." They are like the muscles that are all over our bodies, and they grow as the child grows, and become strong as he exercises them, until he becomes a man. Now the habit of truth is most precious. The little child may be taught it very early. It is not merely a moral virtue; it is a Christian grace. Jesus says, "I am the

. . . truth." If you want to be a Christian, you must own the truth.

You have heard of the word repentance. You know the Bible commands us to repent. Now, what is it to repent? Why, it is just to own our faults and be sorry for them. If you are truly sorry when you have done wrong, you will wish to own it. It is a great struggle sometimes for a little child to own that he has done wrong. But he can never feel happy until he has got the burden off his conscience.

Parents ought to be very careful about this. We cannot deceive God, and we cannot long deceive one another. "Be sure your sin will find you out." If a child is trying to conceal something, it makes him uneasy. You can see it in his eye and in his every motion. He is not quite at peace with himself. Now if you would have a good, strong character, if you would build a tower that will reach up to heaven, begin with truth.

For another block let us have duty. Duty for a little child is obedience. That is pretty much the whole of it. And when we grow up, duty is obedience to God. "Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the

whole duty of man." Now a great many children spoil their obedience by not being prompt. They say, "Yes, I am coming," but they do not come. They are sure they are going to obey, but they put it off. And men spoil their obedience to God in just the same way. They trade on promises. They are always meaning to do better. They deceive themselves by thinking duty will be so easy to-morrow, and will not do it to-day. Do things in time. There will be something else to do to-morrow. If we keep putting off, we shall get hurried and do everything wrong.

Then another rule is to do the unpleasant things first. There are some things hard to do, some hard lessons, or work of some kind. Now foolish boys say, "I have a nice book to read," or, "I want to go out and play; by and by I will study my lesson, or attend to work." But when they have been reading the story-book, it is a great deal harder to work afterwards. Do the unpleasant duty first, then with an approving conscience you take your reward. Do not be in too much of a hurry to get through your task, but finish it up fully

and fairly, and then you will feel a joy in play that you never had before.

The greatest joy in the world is the sense of work well done. The very joy of heaven is when Christ says to us, "Well done, good and faithful servant: . . . enter thou into the joy of thy lord." You cannot enter into joy unless your work is well done. Make this rule, then, always to do the unpleasant thing first. Do not try to shirk your task or study, but finish it up well.

Duty is a sacred thing, and there is never any excuse for not doing it. I do not like the word "excuse." I think it often has a wrong meaning. I remember when I was very young hearing a friend say, "I cannot always do what I wish to do, but I can always do what it is my duty to do." There is never any excuse for not doing our duty.

The Bible never favors excuses. It tells us that those who sin are without excuse. There is no excuse for sin. There cannot be. God never excuses anybody. He forgives the sinner who owns the truth and believes in him. Now, if we have done

wrong, the only thing we can do is to repent and ask forgiveness through Christ. But if we have done right, we need no excuse. Duty needs no excuse, and sin has none. If it is my duty to be in one place, then I cannot be in another. Let us do our duty with all our might, and when we fail, let us own up, and be sorry for it, and ask pardon. Then we shall be right with God, and right with every one else.

But to do these things we want another block. Truth and duty are good blocks to build with. Let us have another. It is courage. It takes courage to do our duty and courage to tell the truth. Some one has said that we never do anything wrong except by being afraid. At any rate, fear mingles with sin. Peter was afraid in the judgment-hall to tell the truth about Christ. Adam was afraid in the garden, and went and hid himself. We ought never to be afraid of anything except sin. When we are told to fear God, it means that we should fear to offend him.

“Fear Him, ye saints, and ye shall then
Have nothing else to fear.”

It is a great sin to frighten children. Parents are sometimes careless in this respect, and sometimes they leave their children to the care of those who terrify or threaten them, and those early impressions are never wiped out. Schiller says that "Fear is occasioned by that which is unknown." Some people cannot help being alarmed by thunder, while others delight in it. We cannot repress all our natural feelings. But we can remember that God is with us. He will take care of us if we do our duty. We are never safe without God. That is the best courage, to wish to be on the side of God and to serve him.

People are sometimes more afraid of a laugh than they would be of a blow. They are afraid to stand up and own the truth. They are ashamed to own their best feelings. Boys are afraid sometimes to be seen reading the Bible, or kneeling down in prayer. If you want to build a strong character, you must never be ashamed to do anything that is right. Some one told Martin Luther that if he stood up for the truth he would lose his

head, but he answered that he would do it if he had five hundred heads to lose.

But it is not men only who are brave. I think women are as brave as men. Men are not always braver because they are larger and taller. There was Joan of Arc, who saved the armies of France, and won the crown for the young king. She was braver than any Frenchman of her time. And the English put her to death, because she would not tell a lie. "I would rather die," she said, "than to sin against the will of God." I tell you, women are as brave and often braver than men. You have heard of Ida Lewis, who kept the light-house at Newport, and how she saved the lives of sailors by rowing out in a terrible storm. It's a warm heart that makes people brave. You have heard the story of William Tell, and how the tyrant made him shoot at an apple placed on his son's head. But I always thought the boy was braver than his father, to stand still and never flinch. And I will tell you what made him brave. Because he loved his father and trusted him with all his heart. A good

heart is a brave heart, mind that. As Tennyson makes Sir Galahad say,—

“My strength is like the strength of ten
Because my heart is pure.”

The bravest thing of all is to dare to do right. Dare to be laughed at and go right on in your duty, no matter what others think.

I do not think enough has been said about our Lord's courage. He never seemed to be afraid of anything. When he was a mere boy of twelve and was questioned by the learned men in the temple, he stood right up and told what he knew like a man. Speak out and tell the truth. Try your best everywhere, in school, and anywhere else. That's the way to be like Christ. When he knew the rulers were plotting against him, he was not afraid, but went right up to the temple, and drove out the money-changers and the cheats. He could not have done it by force alone, but because they knew that he was right and they were wrong.

When the soldiers came to take Jesus in the garden, he just looked at them, and

they fell backward. Always remember his courage. Dare to be a friend of Christ. The time will come when you will see people who do not care for Christ, and who will abuse his name, and laugh at you for obeying him. Be brave, as he was brave. Never be afraid to do right. Be a friend to Jesus now when he wants a friend. "A friend in need is a friend indeed." Jesus will stay by you forever, if you have courage to be his true friend.

Now we have three blocks, truth, duty, courage. There is one thing more and that is faith. But it must be a true faith. What is the use of saying, "I believe" if you don't mean it? You know children sometimes say "make believe." "Let's make believe that I'm a horse or that I'm a steam engine." Well, that is all very well for a play, but faith is different from "make believe." A great many people say, "I believe in God," when they only make believe. Now we must be true and we must dare to do right, then our faith will amount to something.

Now, what must you believe in? You must believe in God, in Christ who died for

you, in the Bible. You must believe in prayer. All children pray, but do you all believe in prayer? I thank God that I learned to believe in prayer. When I was a little boy, I was shut up in the school-room and the door was locked. I had done something wrong, and the teacher left me alone, and locked me in. It began to get dark, and I longed to have him come back. I was only six or seven years old, but I remember just the corner of the room where I stood, although it is three thousand miles away. Well, I began to be in distress and at last I thought I would pray, and I had not got the words out of my mouth before the key went into that door as if it was only waiting for me to pray. I have thought of that almost every day since, and when I want anything, I pray for it. God does not always send it as quickly as that. But I'm sure that he sends it quickly enough. When the right time comes, he is always ready.

The best things to believe in are the unseen. Some people who think they know a great deal, say, "I will not believe unless I can see. Seeing is believ-

ing." A Hindoo once said, "I don't believe in God for I can't see him, or hear him, or taste him." But a friend said to him, "Did you ever have a pain in your head?" "Yes." "Could you see it?" "No." "Could you hear it?" "No." "Could you taste it?" "No." "Why, then, do you believe there is any such thing as pain?" "Because I can feel it." Just so I feel in my heart there is a God. My conscience tells me when I do wrong. That is faith. We cannot see love or virtue. We cannot see the love of our mother, or hear it, or taste it, but we feel it in our souls. That is faith, and if you want to make the faith good for anything, you must be true and dutiful and brave.

Put all these blocks together, truth and duty, courage and faith. They will make a strong foundation. Build them on the rock Jesus Christ, and then build up the tower. Keep on building as long as you live, and it will reach up to heaven.

Some of our dear, precious children who were with us a year ago have already built up to heaven. We don't say much about

them to-day, but we think about them. Some of us scarcely think of anything else. God called them very suddenly. You know I said he knows the right time, and it is sweet for us to remember their truth and obedience.

It is a blessed thing to begin right. It is everything to begin right. For unless you begin right, the tower will all have to be pulled down. You know if you don't put in the right blocks or get them set even, down they come. Begin right, and remember the four blocks, truth, duty, courage, faith.

But you are ready to ask, "Why don't you say something about love?" Love isn't exactly a block, because it is needed everywhere. It holds the stones together. You know when men build, they have mortar or cement to put between the stones. You have seen them mix it a great many times. Now love is like that mortar. It holds all the rest together, little stones and big stones, top or bottom; they all want love to keep them together. You cannot build a happy home without love. The finest house in town is empty without love.

And love can get into the smallest cottage or room. It doesn't need any space, because it comes in everywhere. So Christ teaches us to love those about us, and to do them good always. We do not build our house just for ourselves, but to make others happy and to honor God.

And now in conclusion, I want you to remember what Christ says,—that when a man is going to build a tower he must sit down and think about it. Can he do it? Can he carry it through? It will cost a good deal,—labor and time and self-denial. Will you build your character for Christ? He will help you if you trust him, and try with all your might. But you must try hard. If you meet difficulties, you must hold on. Do not turn back when you have chosen the right way.

Children must be thoughtful. If you are going to build a good character, you must sit down and count the cost. It will cost a good deal. You will have to struggle and toil and deny yourself. It takes a long time to build a tower or a house. But it takes longer to build character. Think about it. I love to see a child thoughtful. Some-

times he will sit or stand perfectly still for a little while, and will almost forget where he is, because he is thinking about something. Think about Christ, and what kind of a character you will build for him. Ask him to help you day by day. Paul calls believers temples of God. They are more precious than Solomon's temple. You have heard about the pyramids and how they rose out of the desert, stone by stone. Hundreds or thousands of men worked on them, and there they have stood for ages.

But you can build something that will last longer. Build a character for Christ. Think what he wants and what will please him. Don't wait till you grow up. Little hands can build, and they do build, whether they think of it or not. But if they are careless, and do not build for Christ, the whole thing will fall to pieces like some of your block houses that were not started right.

God bless you, dear children, and help you to build for Christ; and let this Children's Day, so bright and fair, be remembered as helping you on in the service of God.

Little Things

I read of some American ladies who were presented last week to the Princess of Wales; that is, they were permitted to go and make a courtesy to her, and they were very particular about their dress, and just how they should enter into the presence and how they should withdraw. All that doesn't seem of much consequence to us; but still, if they were permitted to go to court at all, they must behave properly. It would have been an insult to do otherwise. How much more should we all be careful in our behavior before the great God. Most of us care very little for princesses, or czars, or sultans. We know they are not all good people, nor worthy of respect. But our God is full of love. He has given us his own Son to die for us; and surely, if there is any little way in which we can show our gratitude, we ought to do it. And we can all come near to him. In fact, we are in his presence at all times. He knows our beha-

vior, and sees the little things as well as the great, and therefore we ought to be careful to please him. The songs of children pleased Jesus when he was on earth. Their looks attracted him, so that he put aside other people in order that he might show attention to them. "Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly," and "He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much."

We ought to serve God in little things, because his law is all one. We are not to pick and choose between the commandments of God and say we will obey in some things because that pleases us, and in others we will do as we like. If we keep the sixth commandment that does not excuse us for breaking the third. Because we do not steal, that does not make it any better for us to abuse the Sabbath. Indeed, to abuse the Sabbath and make it all fun and games, instead of going to church and Sunday-school, would be stealing God's time. For these commandments are all one. God gave them all, and he did n't say, "You can keep which you like and leave the rest," but they all are precious in his sight. They were all made

for our good and for God's glory. Everything that God says is important, and all that he asks of us is right. We are very apt to deceive ourselves by thinking that a little disobedience will do no harm. The child says, "I want to do just this little thing. It will only take a minute, or I will only do it this once; it will not do any harm. I don't see why I need be so particular." But if God is to be obeyed at all, he wants our whole heart. And is it not true that it is wilful and obstinate in us to refuse to do a thing which we call little and to say, "I will have my own way,"—as much as to tell God that our way is best, and that we know as well as he does; or else that he is too hard with us and wants to make us unhappy?

You all have been at school or expect to go some time. Now, what is the most important thing in a school? It is discipline. Do you know what the word means? It is that the teacher should keep order and be obeyed. That is the first quality of a teacher—to be able to keep order. Now, suppose there was a boy in the school who took a notion that he wouldn't pronounce

the syllables in spelling, or that he wouldn't repeat a word when he was told to, and the teacher should say to him, "John, repeat that word," and he should refuse to do it. Do you think he would be allowed to stay in that school very long, if he didn't mind? Perhaps he would say: "Teacher, don't I get my lessons well? Am I not always present and never tardy?" "Yes, John; I used to think you were my best scholar. But then you must mind. The whole school are looking at us to see who rules. Either you or I will have to give up." Now, dear children, this partly explains our relation to God. He ought to be first. Jesus says, "Ye call me, Master, and, Lord: and ye say well; for so I am"; but if we refuse to honor him and say, "This is of no consequence and that is of no consequence; we will do what we like and let the rest go," we cannot be his friends, for he says, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."

We must serve God in little things, because they are connected with greater. Indeed, it is hardly possible to call anything little, because it may be of so much im-

portance. Some things are larger than others, but not necessarily more valuable. A little piece of gold is worth more than an iron crowbar. A tiny jewel may be worth enough to buy a house. Slight forces in Nature produce great results. Poisons are introduced into the system by minute particles. The smallest parts of a vast engine are just as necessary to its structure as the largest, and the machinery of a whole factory may be stopped for some little defect. So it is with character. Little things often decide our whole life. To be careless of them is to throw away the greatest advantages. You have all heard of Benjamin Franklin. "The Life of Benjamin Franklin, written by Himself," is one of the books that every boy ought to read. One of his sayings I used to repeat when a child was this: "For want of a nail the shoe was lost; for want of a shoe the horse was lost; for want of a horse the rider was lost; for want of a rider the battle was lost."

You see what great things depend on things that are small. There are instances of this all through life. The careless throwing down of a match burns a great

city. A grasshopper is a little thing, but it is an actual fact that grasshoppers in some of our Western states have stopped a railroad train. By getting on the track and being crushed under the wheels, they have sometimes made the rails so slippery that the wheels could not get a purchase, as we say. You that have gone along a little farther in school know that a wheel works on the principle of a lever and must have a fulcrum to act on, else it makes no progress. So the grasshoppers stopped the train.

The Scripture says, "Who hath despised the day of small things?" One of our New England poets writes,—

"There is no great and no small
To the Soul that maketh all."

There is a Hindoo story of an old man, who said to his son: "Bring me a fruit of that tree and break it open. What is there?" The son said, "Some small seeds." "Break one of them and what do you see?" "Nothing, my lord." "My child, where you see nothing there dwells a mighty tree."

Our health depends on small things. We have more than two hundred and fifty

bones. If one of them gets broken or out of place, it gives you great pain. Keep them in place; be careful of them. We have five hundred muscles. Don't overstrain them. Give them proper food and exercise. Any of these two hundred and fifty bones or five hundred muscles can give you terrible pain if they are abused. You think it is a trifle what you eat and what you drink. Only a glass of beer, only a cigarette—that's nothing, men say; but they shorten life and ruin character. Your heart is a little organ, not one-quarter part as large as my hand, but it beats thirty million times in a year, and it is disturbed by every excess and by every angry, hateful passion. God has made our life depend on little things. See that you look out for them. Look out for your character. Your success depends on it. Men judge it by little things.

A business man advertised for a boy to wait in his office. Four or five boys came and brought recommendations from their teachers. One boy had no written recommendation, because his teacher was sick and could not give it to him. But the busi-

ness man chose him, and sent all the rest away. His partner said to him, "Why did you choose that boy without any written recommendation?" "Because I saw he had better ones. I saw him carefully wipe his shoes on the mat before he came in. He took off his hat like a gentleman. I saw that his hands were clean and his hair well brushed, and when I spoke to him he answered modestly and politely, and I said, 'That is the boy for me; he has his recommendations written all over him.'" So it is that little things make up our life; little words, little courtesies, little kindnesses. It is a very foolish thing to say, "Oh, that is nothing;" to be careless about your habits in any way; about your books or your clothes or anything that belongs to you. Some boys are always saying, "Mother, where is my hat?" "Mother, where is my book?" "Mother, where is my slate?" And when they grow up they will be apt to be just as careless and do a great deal of harm to themselves and others. A trifling mistake in figures makes a great error in the whole column, and a flaw in a deed or will diverts property from those to

whom it belongs by right. So mind the little things, for "He that despiseth little things, by little and little shall he perish."

Remember, too, that little things show love. Love is worth more than gold, more than houses or lands. The wise man says, "If a man should give all the substance of his house for love, it should be utterly contemned." Now love reveals itself most clearly in slight actions. Little things are done most unconsciously. They are the outflow of the heart. Little acts of gentleness, little attentions, little gifts, a flower or a card,—how we treasure such things, and what a ray of sunshine they throw into the heart! A girl's love to her mother is seen in helping her, in caring for her when sick, in giving her the best chair, and other simple attentions. Some people are very careless at home. They wish to be polite to strangers, but lay aside their company manners as they do their dress suits. Give me the boy and girl that show their love by gentle acts and sweet ways at home.

Jesus noticed little attentions. While he was always ready to help others, he was sensitive to the expressions of love. He

was pleased when one thanked him for a kindness. In the house of Simon he missed those delicate civilities which he so well deserved,—no water for his feet, no anointing for his head. “Thou gavest me no kiss.” How pathetic it is to hear him say, in the garden of Gethsemane, “Could ye not watch with me one hour?” When you are sick in the night or in pain, how willing your mother is to be awake with you! How good it seems to hear her voice! The other night, at a wedding, I saw a full-grown man kiss his brother. Some people laughed; but he said, “Why should not I kiss my brother?” I love to see little tokens of affection which show that the heart is still young and tender. Our Lord Jesus noticed little gifts,—the woman with her two mites, the children with their songs. Jesus loved the voices of children. When you bring your penny to Sunday-school, sometimes with real self-denial, he sees and remembers the love you show him. When you rise in the morning and are in a hurry to get down to breakfast, Jesus notices whether you take a little time for prayer, whether you

say, "I cannot go down till I have asked Jesus to bless me and help me to do right." I find that I can say the Lord's Prayer slowly in about half a minute. Can't you give half a minute to God? Why, if you really loved him, you would. And yet it is in just such a little thing as this that people show they care nothing for Jesus. In another half minute you can read a verse of Scripture, or even two or three, and that verse might be worth to you more than a fortune. I have heard of a soldier whose life was saved by a New Testament in his pocket over his heart, when a bullet that struck there would have killed him. But, if you have some word of Christ in your heart it will save you from worse than bullets. Remember that little things show love. Don't say, "Oh, that is nothing! God will never notice such a trifle as that." Jesus says, "Whosoever shall give . . . a cup of cold water only, . . . shall in no wise lose his reward." Little words and actions that seem to cost nothing are precious in his sight. I say, seem to cost nothing; but they do cost everything, for they are heart gifts. Not the gift, but

the heart of the giver is precious in God's sight. Jesus says, "He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much."

If it is worth while to serve God in little things, we ought to begin early. Now is the time for you and for us all. But for children it means a great deal more, because you have your life before you. Your habits are to be formed. If you are careless about little things, if you lose time, if you put off your lessons, if you say to little duties, "That's nothing," you will be nothing yourself. The bad habits will get the better of you. The thorns will spring up and choke every good thing. And the more people do for you, the worse off you will be. The more luxuries you have, the weaker and more selfish you will grow.

You know what a fine rain we had last week, and how much good it has done. Yes, but not to lazy people. My old Farmer's Almanac says, "Now for the battle with the weeds, which are trying hard to get the mastery." The farmer that leaves them while they are little will get left himself. As Professor Bailey says, "A weed never misses an opportunity." Just

so with little faults, little temptations. The old fable tells us that Hercules strangled two serpents in his cradle. Many a little child learns to govern himself; that is better than to kill serpents. You will never be a strong man unless you conquer young. Kill the wicked words and the angry thoughts. They are more harmful than serpents. Now is the time; don't lose a day. "He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much."

Just listen now two or three minutes longer. I want to tell you about the value of children to the church, and of the church to children. The church can never get on without children. She pays more attention to them now, and in that is growing wiser and more like Christ. From the first he blessed little children and said that God had revealed to them many things which wiser heads did not know. I visited a rich church in New York city some time ago and asked how many there were in the Sunday-school. They told me fifteen. "Fifteen!" said I to myself; "that church will come to an end pretty soon;" and it did. There is an old saying,

“Great without small
Makes a bad wall.”

I love the stone walls of dear old New England. How nicely a good builder puts the small stones in with the larger ones! Christ, the great builder, wants the little children; that is the way he builds his Church, and every one ought to help along the Sunday-school. I am pleased when I hear of a baby born in our church. “There is a new deacon or a new teacher.” The church will live when the children are given to Christ. We had one born last Sunday, and, I dare say, will have her in Sunday-school in less than two years. God bless her. Such is the value of the children to the church.

But let me tell you also of the value of the church to the children. Each Sunday is precious. The children ought to be here, not only to-day but always. They should have a home feeling in the church. They can easily be taught to love it. It will save you from many temptations. It will make your life happier and better. Serve Christ from the beginning. Give him your heart. Ask him how to live.

You will learn it best by worshiping God with parents and teachers. Ask father or mother to help you about your Sunday-school lesson. Get them to read it with you. We need a family religion. Families that keep together at church are happier at home.

It is a solemn thought that we shall all have to stand together at last before our Saviour to tell him how we have spent our lives. If we begin right, we shall find it easier to go on in his service. If we use every Sabbath well, the week will be happier and the years will take care of themselves.

It was very loving in Jesus to take children in his arms and bless them, but do you remember Mary, who sat at his feet, and John, who leaned on his breast at supper? Begin with Christ and you shall have him all along your journey, till you are old and weary, and then he will not forsake you. He will reward every least action done for him, for "He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much."

Ruth and Orpah

The book of Ruth is one of the shortest books of the Bible. I think our little children know where to find it, for I believe that they are taught in the infant room to repeat the names of the Old Testament books in order. First come the five books of Moses, called the Pentateuch, then Joshua, then Judges, then Ruth. Ruth is a touching story of a woman who went with her husband and her two sons into the land of Moab, where they all died except Naomi and the wives whom her sons had married. Moab was a country beyond the Dead Sea, perhaps one hundred miles from Bethlehem, where Naomi had her early home. But one hundred miles was a great journey for those days, and it is probable, too, that they had to go on foot, as they were very poor. So Naomi, when she desired to return home, said to her daughters-in-law, "Go back to your relations and let them take care of you, and try to be happy in

your early home." Ruth said, "No." She loved Naomi too much. She would rather go with her, no matter how hard the journey was. But Orpah did not like the prospect of poverty and fatigue. She thought she should have a better time in her own country. And that brings us to the passage, "Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her," which means that Ruth stayed with her and would not let her go alone. Ruth came to Bethlehem, and found there a happy home.

You know about Bethlehem. It was the birthplace of David, and long, long after, the birthplace of Jesus, and they were both descended from Ruth, who loved Naomi so well that she did n't leave her.

Nobody cares for Orpah—we never hear of her again; but everybody loves Ruth. Ruth is a favorite name; at any rate it is a favorite name with me, for my grandmother was named Ruth, and I have had some dear relatives and friends of that name, and there have been a good many in this church. I was looking over some old records lately, and I found the name of Ruth a good many times as far back as 1754. In 1775, two

were baptized in this church; that was the year of the battle of Bunker Hill. And then I have an old book, in which Father Wilson kept the names of people he married, and there I found the name of Ruth in 1794 and 1795.

I do not think it is quite as common now, but it is just as beautiful, and I will tell you what it means. There are two meanings given. Some say it means a "rose," but the best scholars say it means a "friend." I should be satisfied with either, and they suit very well the fair woman who became the mother of the most illustrious house of any nation of the world. I never heard anybody called Orpah. The Puritans used to ransack the Bible for names, but I do not think any one ever wanted to call a child Orpah. Now why not? We are not told anything against Orpah. Perhaps she was prettier than Ruth; I don't quite believe she was, and I am sure she didn't have so sweet an expression, but she seems to have been kind and pleasant. She went a little way along the road with Naomi and then she kissed her, and that was all. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth

clung to her and would not let her go alone. Now, if you will listen, I will try to tell you the difference.

Orpah made a show of love, but Ruth had it in her heart. Orpah kissed Naomi; that has been a sign of love in all ages. I do not know where it began, but I have no doubt it began in Eden. I presume Adam invented it. But no sign of love is as good as love itself. It is better to love with the heart, than only with the lips. The proverb says, "Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful." Now, Orpah wasn't an enemy, but her love did not go very deep. She wanted to be kind to Naomi, but she did not care to stay with her. So she kissed her. I dare say she did it very earnestly, because she never expected to see her again. She could not help being fond of Naomi, for Naomi was so good a woman and had been so kind to her. But the kiss did not mean much. It was like shaking hands or making a bow or giving a salutation of any sort when it does not mean a great deal. If they had only been common friends or acquaintances, there would have been as much as this,

and it would have merely signified good wishes.

Very different was the feeling of Ruth. She had found in Naomi's character a new idea of life. All the affections of her youth had been transferred to her. All the memories of her first love were enshrined in this dear woman. She could not bear to see her go forth alone, in her advancing years, bereaved of husband and children at once; her love could not be appeased by kind wishes nor embraces. Her heart was with Naomi, and there was something more than kisses to express it. "Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her." One gave the sign of love, the other had it in her heart.

Orpah had quick feelings, but Ruth made a sacrifice. There is no use in denying that Orpah was affectionate. She doubtless was. We read that she wept with the others. Moreover, she joined with Ruth at first in saying, "Surely we will return with thee unto thy people." She was what some people call demonstrative. Do you think that is a long word? I will tell you what it means. It means that

she did not hide her feelings, but let them right out. Some people have that way; all the feeling they have, they show; others keep it to themselves. You never know how they do feel. Now I do not think either is the best way.

It is good to show our feelings sometimes, and sometimes to keep them in; but it is a pity to make a show of what we do not have. It is a pity to be too loud in our promises or to boast of our love. You remember that Peter boasted that he loved Jesus enough to die for him, and then you know what a fall he had. After that he was more modest, and only left it to Jesus himself, saying, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee."

It will not do to be satisfied with tears or kisses or promises. Better prove your love by self-denial. Did you ever hear of a little child who was always telling how much he loved his mother and putting his arms around her neck and kissing her, and then going off to disobey her—not willing to go to bed when she said so, or teasing for things forbidden? I have heard of such boys. I remember very plainly my

own dear mother saying, "O my son, I love your kisses, but I wish you would remember to do what will please me."

It is better to show your love by action. Self-denial is the test. There is a wonderful story woven together by the greatest of English poets—the story of King Lear. You will read it by and by, when you grow older. There were three daughters, and their old father, tired of his kingdom, called all the three before him and said,—

“ Tell me, my daughters,

Which of you shall we say doth love us most ?

That we our largest bounty may extend,

Where nature doth with merit challenge.”

The two eldest ones vied with each other in telling how much they loved and what they would do for him. But the youngest, Cordelia, did not say much. She had an honest heart. Her speech was not so glib. “I am sure,” she says, “my love’s more richer than my tongue. I should love but little if I could say how much.” And then the sequel shows that she was the only one that truly loved. For the others treated the poor old king so cruelly that he cried out,—

“ How sharper than a serpent’s tooth it is
To have a thankless child.”

Love is shown by self-denial. Outward expression is not enough, feeling is not enough, kisses are not enough, but the love that will make sacrifices endures to the end.

Another point of contrast between Orpah and Ruth is that Orpah forsook Naomi, but Ruth clung to her. They were starting out for Bethlehem. I told you Moab was beyond the Dead Sea. Some of you have maps in your Bibles where you can find it, or I will show you some time on that large map in the Bible room. I do not know how they went; I think it must have been round the southern part of the Dead Sea. Orpah did not like the idea; it would take several days, and the way seemed dreary and they were poor. But that made no difference to Ruth; she could not part from Naomi. Let the way be hard and dangerous, love would venture all. “ Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God.” Don’t you think it is a good deal so with real love to Christ? If we really love

him, we shall wish to follow him; even if the way is hard and self-denying, and the cross heavy, if we really love him, we shall not go back as Orpah did. If the way is good enough for him, it is good enough for us.

Orpah thought, "Perhaps we shall have to sleep on the ground, and perhaps we shall hear the cry of wild beasts, or be attacked by robbers, or at the best we may have little to eat." But Ruth said to herself, "I cannot leave Naomi so lonely; she may be sick and nobody to speak to; she may be tired and faint, while I could help her get food or build a fire to warm her." The thought of letting Naomi go alone was more than she could bear.

And yet there are a good many people who are willing to let Christ go alone. You know he went alone to his cross; even Peter forsook him. Only a few of his friends followed afar off. Don't you think you would show your love better by keeping close to him? You can keep close to him by doing kind acts, by denying yourselves, by choking down angry words, by being willing to do a hard duty,

so as to be like Christ. "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you"—that is, clinging close to Christ and following him. And that is why we love Ruth better than Orpah; because one forsook Naomi and the other clung to her.

Orpah kept on in all her old habits. Ruth became changed in character and piety. What we know of the Moabites is not favorable. If they were not as bad as the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, over whose charred ruins rolled the bitter waters of the Dead Sea, they were certainly not much better in principle. Idolatry reigned among them, and with it were connected horrible vices. Orpah was willing to return and dwell amid such influences. "Behold," said Naomi, "thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods." She chose idolatry with all its consequences. The pure and wholesome laws which governed Israel, with its Sabbaths and daily worship, and strict rules of life, had no charm for her. She thought she loved Naomi, but her love was not enough to change her habits.

Very different was it with Ruth, who

was ready to forsake all. She had seen Naomi's patience and sweetness. She had witnessed her devotion and trust in God, and her heart was touched. She wanted the same piety and was willing to give up all for it.

You cannot be a Christian and follow all your old, bad habits. Sometimes children think that all that is necessary is to say, "I love Jesus," "I believe in Jesus," "I want to be saved by Him." But that is not all. John says, "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." Some people think it is no matter how they behave, if they only say their prayers and sing hymns, but God wants new habits. If you have a habit of being late or of getting others to do what you ought to do yourself; if you have a habit of troubling your brothers and sisters, and teasing your mother; if you always want to be listened to first, and want the largest share of anything good for yourself, that is not being a Christian. You must change all that. Love works a change in the life. True love alters the tones, alters the behav-

ior, makes us think of others and try to live so as to please them.

And the highest human affection is blended with love to God. I suppose Ruth loved Naomi before she loved God. That is the way to begin. Children begin with loving their parents and those about them. By and by they learn about their Father in heaven, and Jesus who came to earth to save them. Now, if they have any true love, if it is anything more than kisses or promises, they will try to do right; they will be ready to give up their own wishes and even do some things they do not like to do.

Love breaks down selfishness. It takes our heart and puts it right into our mother's heart, or the heart of our friend, and it beats for them and tries to please them. And that is what is meant when we give our hearts to Jesus, that we are trying to please him. We cannot always tell how much we love him, but if we keep his commandments, our love will grow day by day.

The reason that Ruth is such a lovely character is that her love to Naomi was

joined with love to God. We may think of them as they went around by the desolate shores of the Dead Sea, and then across the mountains and plains. I think it must have been nearly one hundred miles by the way they had to go. At night perhaps they found some tent or cottage where a kind heart would receive them, for the people were hospitable in those days, or perhaps sometimes they found no place to sleep on but the ground. But they knelt and prayed morning and evening; they believed that God would take care of them, and so they went, hand in hand, until they came to Bethlehem. Ruth did not forsake Naomi; she did not mind dangers nor poverty, nor going into a strange country. "Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God."

Now do you wonder that I like the name of Ruth better than that of Orpah? Ruth has given her sweet name to many children in all ages, and will to many more, until the dear Saviour shall come again, in whose royal line she will ever be

remembered, not for her beauty and her gentleness alone, but for her self-sacrificing love.

And now, dear children, I want you to remember the difference. I have given you four reasons why we prefer Ruth to Orpah. Orpah gave a sign of love, but Ruth had love in her heart. Orpah had quick feelings, but Ruth made a sacrifice. Orpah forsook Naomi, but Ruth clung to her. Orpah kept on with her old habits, but Ruth changed her life.

From this story we ought to learn a lesson of friendship. I told you that Ruth means a friend, though some think it means a rose, but certainly she was a true friend, and that is high praise for any one. It means a great deal. True friendship works a change in us. It is not a fancy, it is not merely kisses and candy, but it is a deep and generous feeling. It makes us want to do good to others. It can only exist where there is something to respect. It will die unless there is good character on both sides. Bad people may love each other for a time, but unless their love sancti-

fies them and makes them better, it will die out like a lamp without oil. Love your friends and try to be better for their sakes and cling to them whatever happens. It is a beautiful proverb that says, "A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity."

Don't forget your friends when they are sick or in trouble. Don't forsake your mother when she is old, but love and cherish your dear ones always.

When I was a little boy I learned a story in verse,—I think it was by Mrs. Follen,—of a boy named Johnny, who had a new pair of shoes. He wanted to put them right on and wear them all day long, and have his old shoes thrown away. His mother advised him to try the new ones gradually, but no! he must wear them all day long, and the soles were so smooth that he had many a fall, and the leather was so stiff that at night his poor little feet were red and blistered, and he was glad the next day to go back to the old shoes. And the moral was:

“Never part from old shoes till they part from you,
Let your new ones be always well tried;
Old shoes and old friends are far better than new,
And, trust me, more worthy of pride.”

Those lines always stayed by me. I love the old friends and wish I were more worthy of them, not only those who are here, but many whom I hope to meet in that better world, where our love and our joy shall be forever perfect.

We should learn, too, a lesson of sincerity. Don't be satisfied with professions or outward signs of love, but have the love in your heart. Kisses are all very well at the right time, but let them mean something. It is better to be quiet and not to boast than it is to make a show of love which is only on the surface.

Kisses do not always mean love; there are a good many proverbs that teach this. One is, “Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.” And this reminds me of some other places in the Bible. We read that David had two captains and they were jealous of each other. Joab took Amasa by the beard to kiss him,

and as he did so he thrust a sword into his side; that kiss meant anything but love. And who does not remember the man who came to Jesus in the garden and said, "Hail, Master," and kissed him, to whom Jesus answered, "Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" It is a mean thing to profess when you do not feel it. Every time you give your mother a good-night kiss, try to love her better, and show your love by kind acts. Every time you say you love the Saviour and sing his praise, think of what he says, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."

Be a true and constant friend and follower of Christ, in daily love and obedience, that what he said of a little child on earth may be true of every one of you, as long as you live: "Of such is the kingdom of God."

Curiosity

It seems strange that we should be told so little about the childhood of Jesus. After his infancy, we hear nothing until he was twelve years old. Then we have a little story of his going to Jerusalem. There, with the freedom of a boy, he lingered behind his parents, listening to the teachers in the temple.

It was a time of anxiety for the father and mother; it was a time of the formation of character for the child. They missed the fearless lad, who had no thought of any harm coming to him in such sacred scenes, and in the temple there was a foreshadowing of his life-work. "Wist ye not," he says, "that I must be about my Father's business?" or, as the Revised Version gives it, "in my Father's house?" I wish children and parents would all think of the church as our Father's house. We should love it more and come more willingly.

What was he doing? Both hearing and asking questions. Those are the two parts of learning — hearing and asking questions; a good listener and a good questioner. He wished to find out things about the law and about the history of God's people. He had a noble curiosity. Curiosity is trying to find out the meaning of things. It has its value and it has its danger. There are different kinds of curiosity.

Our Lord's curiosity was a wise one. He desired to know things that were worth knowing. We are expressly told that he increased in wisdom, — that is the way he did it. The wise boy wants to find out the reason of things. He asks the names of objects, of trees or of flowers, or birds, or insects. The wise girl likes to know how things are made. Even the baby has a sort of instinct that leads to examining this and that and pulling it to pieces to try its strength. We call it mischief, but it springs from a desire to know and test the nature of the object, and if rightly directed it leads to good results. Some great thinkers have

said that curiosity is the most powerful motive in the world. One of them has called it "the scourge of the soul";—that is, it drives men forward as with a whip with many lashes. You cannot teach a child anything unless you awaken his curiosity. If the girl really wants to learn, it is easy to teach her.

A right curiosity is the key to knowledge. The boy who is not satisfied to get only the answer to his problem, but who wishes to know the reason of it and understand why he does it in this way, will go on step by step. Even if he forgets the rule, he will make a rule for himself, because he knows the principles on which it depends. So curiosity is the key to knowledge.

It is the key to invention. All the inventions of modern times have come from curiosity. Some inquiring mind watched the process of things and said, "Can there not be some easier way?" It was thus that clocks and watches were invented. They had no clocks in the churches in early New England; they used to have an hour-glass on the pulpit

to tell how long the minister preached. They were ashamed of him if he did not preach an hour.

Curiosity made the steam-engine and sewing-machines, telegraphs and the telephone. Curiosity has made known to us the heavenly bodies. Men longed to find out about the stars and their motions, and watched them and made telescopes to look at them. It is well worth while in the summer, when you are in the country, where the electric lights do not make the heavens look black, to study the stars and learn their names. I hope some of you will be curious enough to do it.

But curiosity has discovered our earth. Men used to think it was a flat plain. The Indians said that it rested on the back of a tortoise, who used to move about sometimes and make earthquakes. But God has taught us to study for ourselves, and so we have found out what the earth is, and we know just how large it is, and all about its islands and rivers, and seas and mountains. The ancients used to think the sea surrounded the earth, and had no idea of crossing it,

but God put it into the heart of Columbus to search for a path across it. He was so curious that he could not rest, and so at length he found it.

Christ sent men to discover all lands. He said to his messengers, "Go ye into all the world," and so they have gone and are still going. Twelve hundred years ago some pious missionaries brought the gospel to England and taught our ancestors about Christ. Before that they were painted savages living in the woods. Not long after they went far north to Iceland and carried the gospel. And now in our time more is being done to convert the world than ever before.

Did you ever see a printing press? Oh, yes! Some of you have had one, a little one, perhaps. Some curious man invented types; first wooden types, then metallic types. Among the earliest books printed was the "Poor Man's Bible," so called because it could be sold cheaply. What a blessing it has been to the poor man! Now all over the world almost every one can have a Bible. Millions are printed and sold or given away every year.

Has not curiosity been a blessing to the world? All the comforts of life, all the knowledge we possess, and all the good we can do to others comes through an inquiring spirit that seeks out truth. Jesus says, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find." We not only ask in prayer, but we are to seek in the Bible and in the book of Nature.

We are to find out ways to help the poor and the sick and to make others better as well as to grow wiser ourselves.

Such are the benefits of curiosity when rightly used. That is the kind of curiosity that Jesus had and that he wants us to have. I call that a wise curiosity.

But there is a *mean* curiosity. It shows itself in two ways. One is in prying into things that do not concern us. It is a mean curiosity to try to find out things that we ought not. We ought to ask questions that will help us to be more useful; but we ought not to pry into others' affairs or listen to things that do not concern us. They say "Listeners never hear any good of themselves," which means that when we seek to find

out what others say about us we sometimes hear unpleasant things. It is better to do our duty and not ask what people say.

Some people are afraid to do anything till they have found out what somebody will do. You know Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, and what shall John do?" and Jesus answered, "What is that to thee? Follow thou me." Dare to do right, no matter what the rest do or what the others think. Some are always saying, "I want to be like the other boys or like the other girls." Yes, if they do right and set a good example, but if they are proud or vain or tell what is not true or are unkind to one another, go your way and follow Christ, even if you have to go alone. It is a mean curiosity to be always asking what others do.

And it is a mean curiosity to try things that are hurtful. Some boys are always trying to do dangerous things, to skate on thin ice, or to play with gunpowder. I even read of some boys who threw stones at a package of dynamite and caused a terrible explosion. Every Fourth of July some people are killed or maimed

for life, boys lose their fingers or their eyes by this sort of curiosity. "But," you say, "shall we have no Fourth of July? Shall we not be allowed to have any fun?" Oh, yes, if you will do it without risking your life or the lives of other people. Is it not strange that a boy will run such an awful risk of being made blind or lame all his life just out of curiosity to see what a tremendous noise he can make? Isn't that a mean curiosity?

But many think they get their pleasure in this way. Many boys want to know the taste of tobacco and how it will make them feel, and how fine they will look with a cloud of smoke coming out of their mouths. And others will want to know the taste of liquor. I knew a young man in college who confessed to me that he drank just to find out how it would seem to be intoxicated. There are a great many things that it is better not to know. Even the animals teach us a lesson, for they will hardly ever eat a poisonous weed, but will choose that which will be good for them.

There is a great deal in the world that it were better not to know, bad books, bad company, bad amusements. Keep out of them. Do not be led away by a mean curiosity, but seek those things which will make you wise unto eternal life. So we see there is a wise curiosity, and there is a mean curiosity.

But there is also an *idle* curiosity. There are many things which we cannot know in this world, even with all our searching. Men used to think they could pry into the future. In old times there were fortune tellers; there are some now, and spirit rappers, who profess to make known future events. Others were curious to discover the philosopher's stone, which would turn all things into gold. Others tried to find perpetual motion; but it cannot be done. A lively boy is the nearest thing to perpetual motion that has yet been discovered. There are limits to all knowledge. Any fool can ask questions that a wise man cannot answer. The disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Are there few that be saved?" He did not answer. No one can know

how many will be saved. Only he told them to "strive to enter in at the strait gate." We all know that if we seek God with all our hearts we shall find him, but if we forsake him he will cast us off forever.

Some are asking idle questions about the Bible. Why did it not tell some things more plainly? Why were good men so afflicted, and why were men allowed to sin? But these questions can never be answered. It is curious to notice what happens in a Sunday-school class. On the whole, I think too few questions are asked. I think we ought to encourage questions. Sometimes in a Sunday-school or a prayer-meeting they have a question box for those who would rather not speak. It is better to talk with one another, and a teacher should be patient and answer everything as well as he can; but sometimes questions are asked not to help but to hinder.

Curiosity is good, but it has its limits. There are things that we never can find out in this world. A famous author wrote a book on the limits of human thought.

Every one who studies much finds that there are bounds that he cannot pass.

Robinson Crusoe could go about his island and learn what it contained and get wood to build his house and make a pen for the goats that he tamed, but when he came to the shore, he could go no further. Some ship must come to take him off, if he was ever going to escape. So always man comes to the bounds of his knowledge.

I have heard of a prince who was made a prisoner. But they did not put him in a dark dungeon or cell. They put him in a beautiful palace and he could go into all the rooms and see all the spacious halls and books and pictures. More than that, he could go out and walk in the groves and gardens; but one day when he went a little farther than usual he came against a solid wall; then he tried another direction, but everywhere he was hemmed in by the wall. There was no escape. Man is this prince. He has a beautiful home in this world, its wonders are open to him. He can study the myriad forms of plants and animals.

He can build cities and travel over land and sea. But soon he finds it is only a little world. Much of what is in it puzzles him, and he looks with curious eyes to what is beyond. But he is hemmed in by a solid wall.

When our first parents were driven out of Paradise, we are told that God placed at the east of the garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword, which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life. I do not know exactly what that means, but I think it refers to the limits placed on our knowledge. We can only go a little way, compared with what we wish to know. Like Robinson Crusoe on his island, we find ourselves hemmed in on every side. There is an unknown sea all about us. That is the reason God has given us the Bible, to tell us of things which we cannot find out of ourselves. That is the reason Christ came to earth, to make known the love of God. We believe people who come and tell us of what they have seen in distant lands; how much more should we believe Jesus Christ! He tells us nothing foolish or un-

reasonable. He shows his truth and love in every word. He is willing to die for our redemption.

Now some people say we cannot know anything about God and heaven, because we cannot see them for ourselves. But here is our need of faith. We must believe in Christ, who has died for us. We must not try to find out everything by our own wisdom. If you were alone in a great city like New York, you would ask the way and would believe what was told you, or else you would get a map and find out the streets. The Bible is our map. Christ is our guide. We can trust him; thousands have trusted him. Many of your own friends have believed on him and lived happy lives and have sailed out on the unknown sea, assured that Christ would take care of them, as the great poet Tennyson told us in one of his last poems:

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark !
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark ;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face,
When I have crost the bar.

We must not be vainly curious of things that we cannot know, but we must trust Christ and trust our own conscience where we cannot see, for Jesus has said, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter."

Now we have seen that there is a wise curiosity and a mean curiosity and that there should be limits to our curiosity, so that we must have faith in God and let him lead us in his own way.

I want the boys and girls in this church to have the right kind of curiosity. We must not try to find out things that do not concern us. We must not ask foolish questions nor too many. And I want to say to parents that they must listen to their children's questions and try to help them. Remember that the only thing we know about Christ in his youth is about his asking questions and hearing others. And so he went through life. He taught people to think. I would

not give much for a child who had no curiosity, and yet he must know how to control it.

In Worcester, where I went to school, there was a well-known man named Ichabod Washburn. His mother was poor, and when he was a boy nine years old he was sent to live with a harness-maker. As he was going home with the man he saw a windmill. "What's that?" said he. The master answered roughly, "Don't ask so many questions, boy." The boy never forgot it. He did not stop asking questions, but he tried to find out all he could that was useful; he asked questions with his eyes and his ears; that is, he studied into things with an inquiring spirit and so he invented machinery for making wire. With the first money he made as an apprentice, he hired a seat for himself in the church and consecrated his money to good objects, so that the aged and poor of Worcester bless his memory and many a young man has learned courage and faith from him.

How, then, shall we apply our curiosity? All knowledge is useful. Everything you

can know about nature is valuable. If you are in the country this summer, learn the names of trees, and of birds, and of flowers. Keep your eyes and ears open. If you meet a farmer's boy who hasn't been to school as much as you have, very likely he knows ten times as much as you do about woods and fields, and about animals. Learn all you can of common things. Improve your mind and improve your heart. Find out ways of doing good. Go to Christ with the question, "What wilt thou have me to do?" Perhaps this summer will be the turning-point of your life. I said there are many things that we cannot know. With all our curiosity we cannot find out how long we are going to live, nor whether we shall be always healthy, or escape from accidents, nor exactly what place in life we are going to fill, but we can take this question to Christ, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

These boys and girls can ask God to make them useful. These parents ought to say, "I would rather have my child truthful, industrious, kind-hearted, than to

have him get all the riches of the world." And we can all offer the prayer, "That which I see not, teach Thou me."

How many of these boys and girls think of what they will do when they grow up? I will venture to say all of them think of it sometimes. One says, "I would like to be a doctor," and another, "I would like to be a merchant, or a musician, or a teacher, or an architect, or a minister, or an artist." I like to have young people think about such things. The boy is father of the man. The poet says, "The thoughts of youth are long, long thoughts."

Now what are you going to be? I hope some of you will be ministers or missionaries. This church has always had them. The other day, when a class of boys came up into my room behind the organ, two or three of them came and stood here in the pulpit, I suppose to see how it would seem. My heart was touched when I saw them, and I said to myself, "God grant that when I am gone this church may never want sons to preach the gospel!" Boys and girls, ask

Christ what to do. You will not hear his voice, but he will be a voice in your conscience. He will make the way plain. Only be sure that you ask him first of all to make you a Christian, loving God and loving your fellow man. The first thing of all is to have God for your friend. Be on his side. Do the thing he wants you to, with all your might, and he will make your way blessed. Begin like Christ, by hearing and asking questions—be in your Father's house and about your Father's business.

Making Collections

When children go out picking berries, as I used to do often when a boy, they take with them pails or baskets. Sometimes they take a little cup to fill quickly, and then pour into the pail. In this way, they get along faster. Squirrels gather nuts and carry them to their holes for winter, and many other animals do the same thing. Birds build their nests by collecting twigs and bits of thread, and many curious things. Those which are of little value by themselves are worth a great deal when put together, just as the drops of rain form a well or even a lake to supply a whole city. We all make collections of some sort, and if we do it in a right way, it is wise to begin early.

One of the most important things that we have is our memory. This makes us what we are, and endears us to our friends, and is the source of all we have

to think about. If it were not for our memory, we could n't talk. The baby gets a word soon after he gets a tooth; and then he adds another to it, and so on almost every day, till by the time he has twenty teeth he has several hundred words. It is amazing how fast he picks them up, and long words, too. Children brought up with grown people rather like long words. I knew a little fellow who had a whip given him when he was five years old. He was very much pleased, and when something was said about it, perhaps that he must not hurt any one with it, "Oh," said he, "it is a very intelligent whip." Now words are precious, if you lay them up rightly. Good words help knowledge. Bad words defile the mind. That is what Jesus meant when He said, "That which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man." Angry words, slang words that have no sense, bitter words that sting other people,—it is a pity to lay up such as these. On the other hand, to remember good words, the names of useful things, is a blessing. A boy can remember the names of tools

and the sails of a ship, and a girl can tell the names of trees and flowers, and both of them can remember verses of Scripture.

The Christian Endeavor Society is doing a great work in laying up passages from the Bible in memory. No matter if you do not understand them at first. We never understand words until we use them. The child learns to utter sounds and then finds out their meaning, just as when we see a thing and ask the name of it, and then find out what it is for. Here is a child who lays up some beautiful poem or hymn in his memory, and it clings to him all his life. Some thread of association brings it up when he is far from home, and it links him to his youth and keeps his heart young, even when his hair grows gray. I wouldn't lose the memory of lines my father quoted and passages of Scripture he loved, for half the books in my library. For what are books good for if you don't remember them? Begin to lay up good things in your memory, good words and good thoughts. They crowd

out the bad things. Then your mind will be well stored. Everybody lays up something. Be sure that you lay up things worth remembering.

You should lay up things worth keeping. The disposition to lay up things is a part of our nature. Some say it is an instinct. And the Bible often refers to the ants and the bees, that lay up in store for the future. Dogs will hide a bone to have something to eat by and by. This propensity to lay up is necessary for man. In a cold climate, we should have no food in the winter, nor coal to warm us, unless they were laid up beforehand.

Now there is a right way of laying up and a wrong way. It is good to lay up money, if you do it in the right way. Some children spend it as fast as they can. Some save it to buy presents, or to give to the poor, or to teach the ignorant, and some lay it up selfishly. But we all have a propensity to lay up something. We want to own something. The little child says, "I want something for my very own."

That feeling belongs to our nature. You cannot blot it out. It lies deep in the constitution of society, and if I were talking to grown people I should say: "You cannot set up the doctrine of the socialists. You cannot destroy the right of property until you destroy human nature." We all want to lay up something. The child wants to make collections. Boys like to lay up something, if it's only marbles or horse-chestnuts. Oh, what times mother would have emptying my pockets! She would say, "Why, my son, your pockets weigh more than you do yourself." And there are some men whose pockets weigh more than they do. Almost every boy or girl makes a collection. One makes a collection of postage stamps, another of shells, another of insects and butterflies, another of eggs, another of coins.

I went to see a little boy the other day, who had to stay in the house because of a broken leg, and he showed me a lot of pretty stones and minerals that he had picked up in the country, and it was beautiful to see how much

pleasure he took in them. I love to see children have a fancy for collecting. It is one of the most useful things in the world. All the cabinets and beautiful museums and treasures of gems and curious plants have come from this. An eminent teacher inquired of two hundred pupils, and found that all but five had made collections of some sort. Now phrenologists tell us that there is a bump of "acquisitiveness," that is, a bump of laying up things. Now, I don't believe much in bumps, but to lay up things is a strong tendency in human nature. We all want to lay up something. Many will lay up money. Some will lay up old letters. Some hate to throw away anything. You will find in every house old things that are good for nothing, but people say they keep them for the association. We call some things "keepsakes," and indeed the tenderest thoughts will fasten round a faded ribbon, a little outgrown frock, or something that belonged to a dear child now an angel in heaven.

There are things worth laying up and things that are not. It's a dreadful thing

to be a miser, to lay up money just for the sake of it, to hang on to it and try to keep it safe, and count it and dream of it. And let me tell you, some of the lower animals seem to be misers, while some, like the ant and the bee, give a beautiful example of industry. Some hoard up things without sense or meaning. Professor Silliman describes a California wood rat that made his home in an empty stove in an unoccupied house. And what do you think he had in it? "He had a quantity of nails with the points outward, as if to protect his home. Then he had brought from different parts of the house, two dozen knives, forks and spoons, three butcher's knives, a large carving knife, fork, and steel, several plugs of tobacco, an old purse containing silver and matches, nearly all the small tools from a tool closet, the outside casing of a silver watch in one corner, the glass in another, and the works in still another." That was a wood rat; and there are some men just like him.

Now which will you be like, the wood rat, or the ant and the honey-bee?

It is good to lay up if you do it in the right way. Some boys save their first money for books, and some for tools, and some for a printing press, and some, as I said, to help the poor. King Josiah laid up money to build the house of God, and while the workmen were repairing it they found the Bible, that is, the book of the law, all the Bible they had in those days. You have had a Sunday-school lesson about it. If he had just laid up money to be selfish, like a miser, or to feast, like a glutton, he would have left a bad name and had a miserable reign, but he laid up money for good purposes. You know what miser means. It is a Latin word meaning miserable.

There are things worth laying up, things that are useful, to feed us and give us knowledge, and things that are beautiful and helpful to others. It is a blessed thing in youth to begin to lay up things worth keeping.

It is good to lay up things worth remembering and things worth keeping. Let us add, things worth doing. It is important in youth to lay up things

worth doing. You know when you do a thing, it is laid up, that is to say, you can't undo it. You can't bring back yesterday. You can't mend the broken glass. Things worth doing, then, are very important. Deeds are more than words, and more than money or treasures of any sort. You can lay up good habits, habits of kindness and self-denial. I know a little boy who has a baby brother several years younger than he is, and he is very kind to him; he will stay in from his play to take care of him. He will keep very quiet when baby is asleep. That is the way to lay up acts of kindness. The child that begins in that way will be happier and make others happier all his life.

Some children have habits of order and neatness. They take care of their books and playthings and know where they are to be found. Such a one will not be wasting half his life, as some people are, in hunting for things that he has mislaid, and charging other people with carrying them off. He will be prompt at getting up, and not always saying, "Wait a

minute," and so when he grows up, he will not lose the train, nor be behind-hand, but people can tell when he agrees to do a thing that he will do it.

It is a dreadful thing to be cruel or selfish in youth, because a cruel boy will make a cruel man. Lay up deeds of kindness. Learn to govern yourselves. It is an old saying, "He that resisteth pleasure crowneth his life." Alexander was the conqueror of the world, but he could not govern himself, so when he was angry and intoxicated he killed his best friend. After he had done it, he was filled with remorse. He would have given half his kingdom to get back the bloody stroke, but he could not do it. You can do a thing in a minute which a whole lifetime cannot wear out, and you can do some kind and loving act that will make you happy forever. Josiah began to seek the Lord when he was young. The way to seek God is to pray every morning and every evening. You know the Lord's prayer is a morning prayer,—“Give us this day our daily bread.” Some people only pray at night,

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as if they were a little afraid when the darkness comes on, and would like to have God take care of them. But David said, "My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord." It is good to thank God in the bright morning and to say, "Lead us not into temptation."

Lay up deeds of self-denial. Jesus was always thinking about others. We are told that he pleased not himself; that was the secret of his life. Some children think they could be happy if they could do just as they pleased. But that was not the way Christ did. "He pleased not himself," but he tried to make others happy, and he did. He healed the sick, he fed the hungry, he opened the blind eyes, and spoke kindly to little children, so that they loved to follow him and sing his praise. And that was what made him say, almost the last time he met his disciples, "I have spoken to you that my joy might remain in you." They might scourge him, and buffet him, and crucify him, but they could not blot out the joy of kind deeds that live forever. And every child who has ever

denied himself, done a kind act, been generous to his playmate, or told the truth when it was pretty hard, will thank the Lord Jesus for helping him, and for that saying that we are told of him, that "He pleased not himself."

And every boy or girl that has struggled hard to resist temptation and to be good, will have the best company in the world, the holy children that you have read about in your Sunday-school lessons, and all brave and warm-hearted boys and girls since the world began, some of them kings like Josiah, some of them in all trades and places, and girls, rich and poor, but all of them sweet and unselfish. Heaven is a place where good deeds are remembered. That makes heaven on earth, to lay up kind acts, and to be like Christ. Every day you can do something pleasant or helpful. Each day is like a little garden spot. You can plant seeds in it that will grow and bring forth fair flowers and fruits by and by. You can't afford to lose one of them. These summer days seem long to you. Don't let them slip away self-

ishly. Do something kind and good and Christ-like, and it will be precious in time to come.

I have mentioned three things that you must begin to lay up in youth,—things worth remembering, things worth keeping, things worth doing. But listen a few minutes longer and I will tell you how to do this. Seek the Lord first. A good man has said, “God has a large family, but not one of his children can walk alone.” He is ready to help us all. Paul said he could do anything if Christ would only help him. Nobody need be ashamed to have Christ for a helper, for he does n’t do our work for us, only gives us strength and courage. He goes ahead of us.

You know when people climb mountains they often take a guide who knows the way. He does not climb the mountain for them, but he shows them where to go; sometimes he puts a rope round the waist of his followers, so that if they slip they won’t go over the precipice. That’s the way Christ puts his cords of love about us. He shows the way, and

helps us up when we fall. Seek the Lord first, that's the way to be strong. Begin right off. Josiah began when he was still young. He didn't wait till he was grown up. He didn't wait till bad men got around him.

Some children say, "I mean to be a Christian when I am old enough." How old is that? Just as old as you are now. Christ loves you now. He has put in your heart a compass to steer by. He treats every boy and girl like a little ship, which needs a compass, and that is your conscience, and says, follow that and give your heart to God, and begin right off. If you don't begin, you are wasting time. Begin now. If you didn't go to school till you were ten years old, and didn't have anybody to teach you, you would be behindhand. If you didn't go till you were fifteen, and hadn't learned your letters, you would be ashamed. Begin early and you can learn more and more. Somebody says that every man counts one, but a boy is a multiplication table. Boys and girls ought to be multiplication tables, growing fast in good

things. Youth is the growing time. Children grow more before they are sixteen than in all their life beside. Begin early. Christ loves the young. You cannot be too young to serve God.

Lay up things that will last. Character is the most important thing in the world. It goes with us everywhere. I have spoken to you about laying up things. It is the law of nature and the law of God. If we lay up things rightly, we may resemble God. What a glorious thought, that we may resemble God! He is always laying up in store for us. He gathers the rain in rivers and lakes, that we may have water for all our needs. He lays up ice for us in the winter for our comfort in the heat. He lays up coal in the mines, to keep us warm through the winter, and iron to make all the tools in the world, and so of a thousand things. He is always laying up for us. We can resemble God by laying up things that will last.

And we can make things last only by putting them to a good use. Jesus says, "Lay up your treasure in heaven,"

by which he means, lay up knowledge, lay up virtue, lay up kind deeds and good thoughts, and they will go with you, for they cannot die.

A bad man doesn't own anything. He may have money and clothes, and furniture and carriages, but he cannot keep any of them; while the man who has a good character takes it with him. All good things are his. He loves all pleasant sights; he loves his friends and makes friends everywhere. Above all, his heart is set on pleasing Christ, and nothing can separate him from that.

Jesus says, "The meek shall inherit the earth." They shall have all the true joy that this earth can give, the joy of life and action, the joy of work and play, the joy of loving and making others happy, and being like Christ.

And Paul says, "All things are yours; whether . . . life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."

The Piety of a Child

The piety of Jesus is a model for other children. Jesus came into the world not merely to save grown-up people, but to open the way for all children to become like him. I believe there is a great deal of piety among children; perhaps the best and the most of it, for there is certainly less of sin among them and less of pretense, while on the other hand a great proportion of the piety of older people had its roots in childhood. The flower and the blossom were there, from which has come in later years the full fruit.

What is the piety of a child? I will try to tell you so that all may understand what I mean. The piety of a child is not wholly different from the piety of a man, and yet there are some simple things that belong to the child especially. The great thing is to believe in the love of God. The child should be taught that

God is the Father of us all; that He loves us, provides for us, keeps us by night and by day; that he is ever near us; that he is both able and willing to do all things for our welfare. The natural fears of a child may be turned to account by the thought that God protects us. I believe it is very important to teach a child courage. Nothing can be worse than those habits of nurses or thoughtless people to scare children by strange stories or to allow them to think there may be danger in the darkness or the thunder storm. There is enough of timidity in the native disposition, implanted there for caution but not for cowardice. It is said that a life injury may be done by exaggerating the fears of children, while the best thing to overcome them is the feeling of God's love,—his desire for our happiness,—his making all things for our good. In every gift we should remember the source.

There is no verse better for a child to learn than this: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of

lights." This love of God goes before us. It cradled us in our infancy. It made the world and the heaven and the earth for us. It fitted up our home, long before we came into it. It trained our parents and brothers and sisters, and put the love into their hearts that makes home happy. This love goes before us. It doesn't wait for us to deserve it. It doesn't stop because we forget it. It doesn't grow cold when we are troublesome and disagreeable. Even when the child does many wrong and foolish things, God's love still waits to forgive and help. Now I think that we sometimes mistake here, in urging the other side first. We tell the child that he ought to love God, or we put the words into his mouth, "I love God," "I love Jesus," rather than to remember the far greater thing that God loves us. The teaching of the Bible is wiser than that. Jesus takes little children in his arms and blesses them, and says, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven," "We love him, because he first loved us." It is of no great consequence to

say good things about ourselves. Indeed, it is dangerous to put much stress on outward expressions. John says, "If a man love not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" It is a great deal more important to teach a child to love his brother and sister and be kind to them than to say, I love God. Let us have honesty first of all. Children, on the whole, are inclined to tell the truth. They are simple and have no artifice. We do them harm when we put words into their mouths that are insincere. Spiritual truth lies at the foundation of all. To be able to state a thing exactly and fairly is the basis of all science. To have a child know what he sees and know what he hears, and be able to describe it accurately,—that is something even more than honesty; it is candor; it is clearness of mind; it is the beginning of all philosophy.

Two little fellows come into the house some day, their faces flushed and angry; they have had a quarrel. "Now then," says their mother, "what is it?" and

they both begin to talk at once. "But you must n't talk together," she says. "Let one tell his story first, and the other afterwards. Wait a minute; let's play we're having a court, and I'm the judge and you're the witnesses. Now let each tell his story. What did you do yourself? Think a moment. Is that exactly what you did?" The truth will come out with a moment's patience; these little fellows cannot keep it back. And here is the foundation of piety and of all good character. The great point is, how to get at the truth and to teach a child how to see it and love it.

Out of this comes repentance: "Father, I have sinned." There arises the desire to do what is right, because truth and right are almost the same thing. A right line is a straight line. A straight story is a true story. And when children see the truth and are willing to own it, they feel sorry for what is wrong, and they want to do better.

I do not mean that all this is natural religion, which needs no teaching and no divine help. The great point is what is

said about Jesus, "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him." Is not Jesus willing to bestow his grace upon your children? If the Holy Spirit dwells in your hearts and homes, if children see that you depend on God, that you feel as if every good thought and impulse come from Christ, they will breathe in the influence. There is often a deep earnestness about children. They are merry and bright, to be sure, but they are not half so trifling as some grown people. They are not strangers to pure and lofty thoughts. Let them know that you depend on God, not only for health and food and all common things, but that you want his blessing and his love, just as you want the sunshine, and they will imbibe that faith which is the keynote of religion.

This, then, is a child's piety: To know that God loves him, and then always to see the truth and to tell the truth. You cannot tell the truth if you do not see it, and people get their eyes blinded and their thoughts and feelings twisted so that

they do not see what is right. It is a great thing to begin early to see things as they are. Hence will come confession and repentance, and a desire to do better. Hence will come the sense of need, and forgiveness and love to others. And through this circle we shall come round again to the great thought that God loves us, and if we let his grace into our hearts, we cannot help answering back, "We love him, because he first loved us."

Having thus presented in brief what is the piety of a child, I am going to try to show you how it grows and ripens. You know a vine needs something to grow upon. Piety is like a vine. It needs to be trained and helped. First of all, we want the grace of God as Jesus had it, to plant the vine; then it needs something to grow upon. I mention three things. One of them is prayer. Prayer comes easy to a child. He is accustomed to ask. He asks before he can talk, that is, he cries for things, and that is a sort of asking. He believes his father and mother can do almost

everything, and it is easy to pass from that to the thought that God is the real source of blessing. The very transition from the day to the night is a lesson of prayer. All pains and weaknesses teach us to call upon God. All sins even, if we honestly own them, drive us to his heart. The prodigal son did n't even say he was sorry, though no doubt he felt so. He only got as far as to say, "Father, I have sinned." So the little child comes to the mother and says, "I did a wicked thing. I want to be forgiven." Thus we learn prayer, and thus we climb up to God, just as the vine climbs up on a lattice or on the side of a house or tree.

The vine that is left on the ground gets trampled, eaten of worms, its leaves all soiled and begrimed. It may be alive, but it is no place for nice grapes to grow or to flower in dirt. The Bible compares Israel to a wild vine. He bringeth forth fruit unto himself. There's a good deal of that kind of piety. It may possibly be alive, but where prayer is neglected—prayer in the morning or evening—with the family, in the company

of Christians, that piety cannot grow. It is in danger of being destroyed. It is a kind of bramble-bush piety, that people trip up on when they go across the meadow, or that is trodden by cattle. The child's piety ought to grow up into clearer air, where all our wishes are brought to God.

And another part of the lattice is the Bible. It is our support and our strength. We must learn to read it while we are young. I do not say that every child will like it. Some children do not like books anyway. They do not like to read. Well, be honest about it. Do not boast how much you love the Bible. But since everybody knows that it is the best and greatest of all books, try to climb up to it. I do not call the Bible an easy book. Easy books that require no thinking are not good for much. It is a little hard at first, but boys love to climb, and girls, too. There are too many easy books. Learn to read something that is not so easy. Every child ought to acquire the habit of reading a portion of the Bible every day. I thank God that I was

taught to read the Bible in my youth. In a little while it became second nature to me. I wasn't happy if I had not read my Bible in the morning. I would not give up what I learned of it before I was fourteen years old for all I have learned since. I have whole shelves of learned books about the Bible, scores and hundreds of commentaries. I would give them all away sooner than forget what I learned when I was a child. Climb up on that lattice. You will see better things than can be learned in play or even in work. You will find things to think of and to strengthen you all the days of your life.

And one thing more to help us is the Sabbath. The Sabbath is one of the greatest helps to a good life. It rests the body and the soul. It makes us remember that we belong to God, and that we belong to each other, too, because it brings us together as God's family, to worship and to say "Our Father." Now I do not think it is always natural and easy to love the Sabbath, any more than it is to love the Bible. You must

deny yourselves in order to do it. And I do not think that we ought to make the Sabbath pleasant by forgetting what day it is. It is not a day of amusement or frolic. Even the child should early be taught to make a difference. And the services of the day ought to be so arranged as to give sufficient employment. To go to church in the morning should be a regular thing. Even if it is a restraint and sometimes a little wearisome, it is much happier even to the child than staying at home. There is a beauty in restraint. A child without any restraint is miserable. Some tone of reverence is caught, some pleasure in singing and reading, some thought, even, that will be remembered in after years.

The Sunday-school affords a more manifest delight to the very young, and thus, with a little attention at home, the day is filled up with good things. We need not repress the prattle of little ones, nor chide their natural activity and restlessness, which must have some vent. But a partial restraint is to be put upon the Sabbath, as a day for higher thoughts

and gentler behavior. Some self-denial is necessary to all religion. The Lord's day will not be a delight without the ruling ideas of praise and worship. To give up rude plays and noisy idleness may seem a little hard to some. Our higher nature is not educated without effort. But by and by the value of the Sabbath will come out, just as of all things good. If it costs something, it will be worth something.

I say, then, that these are the ladders on which children's piety grows,—prayer, the Bible, the Sabbath, trying to make others happy, giving up something for parents and brothers and sisters and friends. So the soul gets up toward heaven. The child does not grow in grace by always doing just what he has a mind to. The boy who cannot govern himself, who never does anything but what seems amusing, will never amount to much. We want habits of self-denial, of pleasing God and learning good things, by which we may grow strong.

If you have the grace of God in your heart and believe that you are forgiven

through Christ, still your piety needs something to grow on—prayer, the Bible, the Sabbath, self-denial, doing good to others for Christ's sake.

And now some one will ask me, "But do n't you think a child ought to be converted?" I think every child needs the grace of God in his heart. No one believes more solemnly than I do in the truth that God must give us a clean heart, and put a right spirit within us. But conversion, as a marked or conscious change, the child does not know much about. The Bible never says a child must be converted. It says that men must be converted and become like little children, not "that little children must be converted and become like grown folks." The Bible never says a word about Joseph's being converted, nor Samuel, nor Daniel- and his companions, nor Timothy, nor John the Baptist. The grace of God was with them. Your children may have the grace of God, if you and they will ask it together. I do not believe that a child is good and holy by nature, but I believe, with all my soul, that many open their

hearts to the grace of God very young. They are sanctified, like John the Baptist, from their birth. I believe if we did not offend and discourage little children, there would be a great many more growing up into true piety.

I believe, then, that children may be Christ's own friends very young. We ought to encourage it, not by way of a sudden and extraordinary change, not by making them say that they love Jesus, but by asking the grace of God and trusting him to help them in every good word and work. I believe this is conversion, though the child does not know the meaning of the word. Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe has written an account of her early life. She tells of a certain Sunday when she went to church and her father preached what he called one of his "frame" sermons, not a wooden frame, but a spiritual frame, where he left all contested questions and let the spirit of devotion rule, and taking the text, "Henceforth I call you not servants . . . but I have called you friends," tried to show Jesus as a soul friend offered to every human

being. She thought within herself, "That is just what I want." But then she remembered hearing that people ought to have conviction of sin. She did n't know what it meant exactly. But again she thought, "If I need conviction of sin, Jesus can do that for me, too." So after church she went to her father and said, "Father, I have given myself to Jesus, and he's taken me for a friend." He took her in his arms, while his face beamed on her like the sun breaking out on a landscape. "Is it so, my child?" said he. "Then has a new flower blossomed this day in the kingdom of God." Here, then, is what the child wants to know, that Jesus can do everything for him, and that he is willing to be his friend and a true friend always.

Never think for a moment that we can get along without God's grace. He only can make our hearts right. We must ask him to do it, but we should not search too closely how he does it. "Consider the lilies how they grow." Who ever saw the seed sprout, or the first opening of the seed under the soil? Look at the

trees and flowering shrubs all about us in this glad season. You know that they are growing, but who was there when they started? I tell you, God was there. And so God is in the heart of a little child when he trusts him. Do any of you think this is new doctrine? I tell you, it is as old as the Lord Jesus Christ, when he said, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

I was reading the other day some words of Richard Baxter, an old Puritan of two hundred and fifty years ago, author of "The Saint's Rest," "The Call to the Unconverted," and many other devout books. And he says, "As large experience as I have had in my ministry of the state of souls, and the way of conversion, I have met with very few who say they knew the exact time when they were converted. Even in those cases, I thought they were probably mistaken. I was once in a meeting of Christians eminent for zeal and holiness, some ministers, others at this day famous, and it was desired that every one should tell the manner of his conversion, and but

one could conjecture the time, and it seemed to me that most of them had the experience of Samuel,—‘When he was a child, the Lord loved him.’ If your children can only find out that the Lord loves them and put themselves under his guidance, they will share the life divine.”

Child piety is not grown up piety. It is not stiff and constrained. It loves play. It is frolicsome. It cannot endure long services. Above all, it should not be looked on with suspicion. Because your child is passionate or fretful or disobedient, do you say, “He is n’t my child”? And do you suppose Christ drives away little children every time they do wrong? No, he is ready to rebuke them, but to do it tenderly, and help them to do better.

And young people look suspiciously on one another sometimes and say, “You can’t be a Christian, because you get vexed or say rude things, or laugh when you ought to be serious.” This is not the best way to criticise one another or to teach our children to do it. It is a hard struggle for any of us to do right. There sleeps in every child’s heart a whole flock

of wild birds—tempers, desires, appetites. Some little accident wakes them up and sets them flying. Jesus came to soothe these passions and help us govern them. That little boy may be trying very hard. He has a hard load to carry; do n't push him and sneer at him and make it harder, but give him a friendly word and a hopeful smile. Do not forget that Christ loves him even as he loved Peter with all his faults.

Children's piety is the hope of the church. It is the very salt that saves the world. I sometimes think it is worth more than all beside. At any rate, Jesus praised it more than any other.

We must have this piety, in the home, in the chapel, in the church. It is worth more to your family than money or health, or the best furniture and clothes. Grow up with them into a Christian life. Expect to see the grace of God upon them, and to see them acting like friends of Christ all the time. Do not wait for some extraordinary event, or imagine that Christ wants grown-up recruits, and will not have any other. If you have made that mis-

take and put off too long the lessons of sympathy, try to make up for the past with a new hopefulness and zeal.

Dear children, remember that you cannot lose the friendship of Christ without your own fault. He died to save you all. It is your birthright. Do not sell it for a trifle. Do not let the days slip by and say: "I'll have a good time first. I'll wait till I'm grown up. Religion is for grown folks, not for me." That is the mistake which ruins many lives, which gets you into habits of forgetfulness and indifference, that cannot be shaken off. Now is the time for Jesus' friendship. Bring him the freshest flowers. Bring him the morning dew. He will save you from a thousand sorrows and shames, and give you a life worth living.

Clothes that Never Wear Out

When the Israelites came out of Egypt, they were kept back forty years in the wilderness because they disobeyed God and were not yet ready to go into the promised land. There they wandered forty years, and God took care of them. They wanted nothing. He fed them with manna and provided for all their wants. We are even told that their clothes and their shoes did not wear out for forty years. Now what do you suppose that means? Some Jewish rabbis said that it was a continual miracle, so that the little child, with a foot no longer than my finger, never needed a change of shoes, but as he grew his shoes grew larger, and his clothes fitted him just as well when he was twelve years old as when he was six. That would be very convenient, would n't it? I think some mothers would like to have their boys' clothes grow in that way, so that last year's trousers would be just

as good and just as much longer as the children are taller. That is the way the Jewish scribes explained it. I do not think it is just the right way, but I am sure that it means that God provided for them, as we read in another place, so that they lacked for nothing. They did not have to enter into Canaan like a set of ragged beggars, but they had clothes and shoes that were not all worn out. If your shoes and your clothes do not last always, there are other things which God gives us that never wear out. And that is what I am going to talk to you about this morning: things which God gives us that never wear out.

Useful lessons never wear out. What we learn in youth is more easily remembered than what we learn afterwards. A child learns a great deal before he goes to school. He learns to talk, and that is really a wonderful thing, for our language contains a great multitude of words. To be sure, we do not use all that there are in the dictionary, but there are several hundred that we use every day of our lives, and girls and boys pick them

up almost as fast as they would pick cherries off a tree.

We think it a wonderful thing if a parrot can learn half a dozen words. I know a sick lady who has a parrot, and when she is awake in the night and feels lonely she says, "Polly, are you awake?" and Polly says, "Yes." But children learn whole sentences and poems and understand them, too.

There is a great deal to learn in the use of hands and feet and eyes and ears. The little child is taught to fold his hands together and to kneel down and to close his eyes when he prays, and that puts into his mind the thought of an invisible God, one who is present, though we cannot see him, to whom the darkness and the light are both alike. Every kind of knowledge is useful; to know one tree from another, to know one bird from another. I have a little friend in Massachusetts, not more than eleven years old, who can tell the name of nearly every bird that ever comes to New England. He knows not only how they look, but how they fly, and what sort of nests they

build. Rev. James Wilson, pastor of this church, who came to this country a hundred years ago this year, was very fond of birds and flowers. Almost the first thing he noticed when he landed in America was the song of the whippoorwill. You know how clear the notes come out, "whip-poor-will."

It is a great thing to have one's eyes and ears open, if you can only see and hear useful things and have the right thoughts about them. I am glad the children plant trees in the park. It ought to teach them the names of trees. I have heard of one class that did not know what their tree was, and some called it one thing and some called it another. I hope that this summer you will learn much from the works of God's hands.

But there are many things to learn from books. The studies that you have at school will be worth a great deal to you in your after life. You may not see the meaning or worth of them now, but you will find it by and by. Do not be in a hurry to get out of school or to give up study. Some children are always saying,

“I don’t see the use of this,” but by and by they will suffer for their ignorance and impatience. The things learned by hard labor remain with us, and it is a great pleasure in after years to remember the struggle we had with them.

Then, again, the maxims we learn in youth stay by us. Do you know what a maxim is? Why, it is a short rule, telling us how to work. If you know the rule in arithmetic you can do a great many problems. We want good rules for life. The Saviour laid down the best maxim of all,—the Golden Rule—to do as you would be done by. There is another maxim in the latter part of the New Testament, “Confess your faults one to another.” “Own up,” as we say in common language, when you make a mistake; do not stick to it for the sake of pride. Every one needs rules of life; you cannot build a good character without them any more than you can build a house without a plan. The carpenter carries a foot rule or a two-foot rule to use all the time.

We want rules that will stay by us. We want good tastes and love of good things.

Knowledge of the Bible that we get in youth is most precious. You think it a little tedious to read a chapter, or a part of one, every day, but there is nothing that will help you so much or stay by you so long. The stories that are seen in New England papers, the funny anecdotes that amuse us for a while, do us little, if any, good. It is the things that are really substantial and thoughtful that benefit our lives. It is better for children to have books that are above them, rather than those that are silly and weak. The minds of children are often more mature than we think, and they will soon grow to like better things if they are encouraged to do so. Foolish and weak stories are no better for the mind than candy is for the stomach.

When I was seven years old, a very dear friend, now dead, gave me fourteen volumes of valuable books. I do not suppose that he thought I should read them then, but he gave them to me because he was going away to a distant place. They were books far above me. In fact, there was only one that I read for a long

time, and that was "Pilgrim's Progress." The others were such books as the life of the missionary, Henry Martyn, and of that devoted friend of the Indians, David Brainerd. I used to look at those books with a sort of awe and reverence. My name and the name of the giver were handsomely written on the fly-leaf, and I felt I had a great treasure, though I could n't understand its value. But that gift has always had a great effect upon me, and I have the books still, where I see them every day. I often take them down to refer to them. How thankful I am that my friend gave me something that would keep!

I suppose at the time I should have been more pleased with playthings or with "Mother Goose." But here were things that would not wear out. Remember that, when you give presents to children. The impressions of early life are strong. Books are sacred things to me; first of all, the Bible, God's book. I was taught to handle it with care and not to pile other books or common things on it. And I dislike to see any one do so now.

All good books have a kind of sacredness. Whatever can teach us useful knowledge, or cheer or warm the heart with love to God or man,—these things are precious. The things which we learn first, if they are right things, do not wear out, but last forever.

Another class of things that do not wear out is good habits. Habits are a kind of clothes. That is what the word means. It is very common in old English. Sometimes we use the word in that sense now. When a lady rides on horseback, she wears what is called a “habit.” But usually when we say habits, we mean customs or the way people have of doing things. The habits we form early do not wear out. It is a great thing to have a habit of promptness. One of the best things about going to school is the rule of being there in time. The school begins at just such an hour. If you are not there at the time, you are late. Five minutes late, one minute late, half a minute, they are all late. I wish people would remember that in coming to church. If any of you children are

behindhand Sunday mornings and try to persuade your father and mother that it is no consequence when they get here, I hope you will remember that it is just as important to be at church in time as it is to be in school, and that marks are not everything.

There are many other good habits to be learned in youth; one is neatness. David asks, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart." Clean hands and a pure heart ought to go together. Neatness is essential to self-respect. So is patience. We must be willing to take time to have things in order and to remember that God is not the author of confusion, but of peace.

I have several times been at the State Home and School, where poor children, who have no parents to take care of them, live in pleasant cottages on a beautiful farm. It is worth while to see how carefully they are taught to make their beds, and how nicely they arrange on their bureaus their little toys and pictures.

“Order is heaven’s first law,” and some children who have a great many expensive things are not neat and orderly. This is a lesson for the whole of life. These are habits that will last. Get good habits while you are young. Do not say, “It is no matter.” Do not fly round and turn everything topsyturvy. Lay your things away carefully and you will know where to find them.

Another good habit is the habit of truth. Above all things, learn to speak the truth. You all know that the most shameful thing in the world is a lie. But a great many people who do not mean to tell a lie, do not tell the exact truth. We are very apt to be satisfied with coming somewhere near it, or with guessing at it, instead of hitting it exactly.

Now one of the things you are sent to school for is to learn exactness. Suppose your teacher to-morrow morning should call you up and say, “How many are six times seven?” and you should answer, “Oh, it is about forty,” probably he would be a little angry and say, “I

wish to know just what it is." Then if he called the next one and said, "How many are nine times nine?" and he should say, "Oh, about eighty," your teacher would say, "What is the matter with this class? You will have to stay after school and learn not to answer in that way." The multiplication table is a pretty hard thing, but it must be conquered; and after all, the greatest value of it is to learn to tell the exact truth and not to use that mischievous word "about."

"About right" is never right. The Bible never tells us to do "*about* right." We often deceive ourselves in this way. We have our lessons *about* learned, or we have *about* finished our work, or told *about* what happened, instead of doing what we know to be just right. We are to come to Jesus just as we are. We need to have all our sins forgiven and not to excuse them. You remember the story of the woman who touched the hem of Jesus' garment, and afterwards, when he said, "Who touched me?" she came and fell at his feet and told him

all the truth. That is the way to be saved. Come and tell Jesus all the truth, tell the truth to your father and mother. Learn to be true always. Get the habit of it now when you are young. Be a true Christian, a true friend, a true lover.

“ To thine own self be true,
And it will follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man.”

Another thing that does not wear out is kind actions. They leave a pleasant feeling on the mind, and a pleasant look on the face. They make others happy, and diffuse an atmosphere of gladness all around. There never was any one who did so much to make people happy as Jesus did. He healed the sick. He made the blind see. He cheered the disciples in a storm, and told them not to be afraid. He was often telling people in trouble not to be afraid. You ought to remember that, and when there is any danger, or when you find it hard to do right, he speaks to you, saying, “Be not afraid.” We can be kind to the poor and

sick, and kind to brother and sister and to our playmates, ready to help those who need it. The great Scotchman, Thomas Carlyle, when he was a child, saved in a teacup three bright ha'pence. But a poor old Shetland beggar with a bad arm came to the door one day, and Carlyle gave him all his treasure at once, and when he was an old man he used to say that the thrill of joy he felt then was worth more than all the money he had ever had since. Kind acts last, and they lead to others.

See that boy with a grumpy face; he is dissatisfied about something, and won't play or join the rest to make up a game. By and by, another one comes with a friendly look. He is ready to do anything; he is willing to be *it* if the rest want him to. How quickly the order of things is changed! And when that boy grows up and comes into the church, he will be willing to take his part; he will not be always finding fault with others, but will do whatever will help along the cause. He will be willing to be *it*, if the church needs a deacon or collector or

some one to do a trying duty. I can tell you, kind actions pay.

We all of us can do kind acts and speak kind words. Did you ever have a rough word spoken to you that made the tears start into your eyes? Then remember how it feels, and be gentle with others. You know we had in the Sunday-school a little while ago, a lesson about the excellent woman. I dare say some of you thought it a queer lesson for children. But there is a great deal to think of in it, and one verse says, "In her tongue is the law of kindness." That is a beautiful verse. Some of us whose mothers have gone to be with Christ remember how gentle they were, not to us only but to other people, and what kind words they spoke to neighbors and friends. What a mighty thing the tongue is! It is safely enclosed by a row of teeth, like soldiers standing guard, and lips that we can hold tight and seal when we have a mind to, but how often the words slip by before we think—foolish words, angry words. We do not see people's tongues very often. The doctor

comes and looks at them. I wish there were some doctor who could put the law of kindness into them. Yes; there is one, and that is the great physician, Jesus. He can teach us how to be gentle.

I said we do not see people's tongues very often, but we feel them. Did you ever see the tongue of a snake? How he darts it out sometimes! I have a very vivid image of the tongue of a snake, and yet the tongue of man does a great deal more harm. They say that in India twenty thousand people die every year from snake bites. That is a great many, but the tongue of man does more harm than that. It makes homes unhappy; it profanes the name of God, and leads to all manner of crime. When we think of the cruel and mean things that are said, we might almost wish that men had n't any tongues.

But, blessed be God, there are kind things, too. There are songs of praise and holy Psalms that are repeated from age to age. The tongue is the glory of our frame. I do not think much of epitaphs, but that would be a very sweet thing to put on a memorial stone, "In

her tongue was the law of kindness." Kind actions last. They do not wear out. They make the world better. They conquer evil. And that is the way we can show our gratitude to our Lord Jesus Christ. We owe him everything. You know he was hungry in the wilderness, and he was tired at the well, and he was thirsty on the cross, and the worst pains we ever had were nothing to his. How can we reward him? How can we show our gratitude? Just by being kind and loving. When others are tired or sick or in trouble of any sort, we can show our love to Christ by helping them.

I dare say you have said a hundred times, many of us a thousand times, at the end of our prayers, "For Christ's sake." But what are you doing for Christ's sake? Here is a little errand for mother that keeps you from your play, or there is a self-denial for brother or sister, or here is a chance to hold back an ugly word when you are vexed and put a kind one in its place. Now, then, think you are doing it for Christ's sake. That is the way to be a Christian;

that is the way to have Christ living in you. And Christ will remember it, and you will remember it, in the kingdom of heaven. These kind actions will live forever. Our Saviour was willing to endure hardship, but he wanted love. He was always pleased when people did or said kind things to him, not for the thing itself, but for the love. Love lasts forever. That is what St. Paul says in the poem of love, the thirteenth chapter of I Corinthians. Prophecies shall fail, tongues shall cease, knowledge shall vanish away, but love never faileth.

These are some of the things, then, that last forever: Useful lessons, good habits, kind actions. Try to remember them. But how are we going to get them? Listen a minute or two more while I tell you. Get them from God. He is the giver of all good gifts. He fed the children of Israel with manna and provided clothes and shoes. You know their shoes were not like ours. They were sandals of wood, or, more likely, a piece of leather under the foot, fastened on with a leather string. And

their clothes were simple, made of wool or the skins of animals, and worn loosely, like a robe. They had plenty of flocks and herds, so that there was no trouble about getting these things. God did not make their clothes for them, but they were just as much his gift, and he provided for them, so that they should not be in rags and tatters. They did not have to wear worn-out things. And God gives us better things than these, that will never wear out. Ask him to help you every day. That will be a good prayer for us all: "Lord, do not let my patience wear out, and do not let my temper be spoiled. Clothe me, dear Jesus, in thy righteousness." That will never wear out. Ask him for help every day, and he will give it.

The story of God's taking care of his people in the wilderness is an old story, but the Saviour teaches just the same thing. The Bible is all one. God led the people in the desert, and their clothes and shoes did n't wear out. Well, Jesus says the same thing in the twelfth chapter of St. Luke at the thirty-third verse:

“Provide yourselves bags which wax not old.” Where are you going to get those bags? Not at the stores, though they have so many things. But we can all have them. Indeed, we do have memories and hearts, where we can keep good things that will never wear out. Obeying Jesus, and doing right things for his sake, will make us happy forever. They will be kept in the bags that wax not old, and be a treasure in the heavens that faileth not.

Dear children, we are all traveling, like the Israelites, towards the promised land. A great many failed to get there because they were disobedient. None would have reached it at all if God had not provided for them. Shall we all reach the promised land? Teachers and children, shall we all be there together? Christ wants us with him. He has room in his heart for every one of us, but we must be like him. And he wants to clothe us now with his robe of love. If you do not have his robe of love, you will not be fit to be there. He wants us to be Christian soldiers.

You know Paul tells us that the Christian soldier should put on the whole armor of God. It covers head and breast and arms, and for sandals, the preparation of the gospel of peace, and it puts a sword into our hand,—even the word of God, which is a better defense against temptation than any other sword. Will you have it all now? Will you ask God to provide for you, and to lead you all your life? May we all have this great blessing, every child and grown person of us all, that we may spend a happy eternity together in the presence of our Saviour! Amen.

Kindness to Animals

One of the best things about living in the country is to become acquainted with animals and birds. To see how useful they are and to know their habits is a very good thing. We can learn something about them from books, but it is better to see them, and know how to take care of them, and to watch them in the barn or the field,—and best of all to love them and be kind to them.

All the peaceful animals, the cow, the sheep, the deer, have from earliest ages been men's companions and provided them clothing and food. Shepherd life is the earliest of history. Abraham kept flocks and herds. Even now in China bullock carts are the common mode of traveling. In Russia, the reindeer drags the sledge swiftly over the snow.

The reindeer will thrive on the moss which is found in the poorest soil. It is amazing on what scanty fare some animals

can live. The poorest squatters on the unoccupied fields in upper New York city keep goats; or, rather, we might say the goats keep themselves, for they can make a living where there seems to be nothing but ash heaps and tomato cans.

The domestic animals are often subjected to much suffering. Not only is their food scanty but they are transported and driven from place to place, often enduring much distress. Think of the poor cattle and sheep jolted over the continent in box cars, standing crowded together, irregularly fed or half maddened with thirst, terrified by the noises and the darkness of the tunnels, and the clouds of smoke, and trains of sparks. The loading and unloading are full of pain. There is nothing worse to man or beast than fright. Children know something of the feeling. In modern times we are more careful to guard children from terror.

But think what is suffered by domestic animals. How they tremble in every limb! How they rush madly hither and thither for an escape! Civilization has increased these cruelties. Jacob was so tender of his

flocks that he told Esau, "If men should overdrive them one day, all the flock will die." Happily much of the suffering of animals carried on the railway is relieved by having the market supplied with meat ready dressed instead of the former habit of transporting the animals alive. Horses, too, are relieved of the strain and burden of drawing street-cars.

Still, the horse has much to endure, both of toil and pain. Probably he has more diseases than any other animal, because of his unnatural life. I suppose the sufferings of the horse, more than anything else, have led to the establishment of societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals, and laws have been made to relieve them. Statutes provide against filthy and confined stables in cities, dangerous to human life, and against various forms of beating and tormenting.

The foot of a horse is a curious member and the process of horseshoeing is often painful. Of course the horse must be shod if he is going over stone pavements. He needs shoes as much as a boy does and often a good deal more. Down on Cape

Cod, horses often go barefoot, because the light sandy soil is safe for them. It is fun to go barefoot. But boys and horses need shoes in most places and most of the year. Boys often have nails in their shoes and are proud of them, but how would you like to have nails driven into your heel? Horses have thick, horny hoofs, so that the nails will not hurt them if properly set. A good blacksmith is careful of the horse's foot, which is a wonderful and complex structure. A bad or cruel workman often cuts the hoof too close, which hurts like cutting your nail down to the quick. Then if the shoe is badly set, the horse becomes lame. Suppose you were put into a pair of stiff shoes, that pinched with every step, and you had to wear them day and night, you wouldn't be very proud of your new shoes, would you? The horse often has to suffer from bad shoeing, from hard driving, from heat and cold, and from a galling harness.

It is not poor men chiefly that sin against the horse. His head is hauled up to an unnatural height and kept there. The labor of going up hill is greatly in-

creased. Did you know that a horse walks or runs by the help of his head? The weight of his head makes it much easier to move forward. His head ought to be free, or if a check is used for convenience, it should be loose and removed on going up hill. In some places signs are put up, "Uncheck your horses while going up hill." I cannot say all I should like to about horses' heads, but let us go to the other end of the subject and speak of their tails.

A horse's tail is an ornament and a protection. It disgusts me to see the little stumps of lacerated tails on horses driven by fashionable men and women. They make a show of their own cruelty by this practice, and the habit of clipping horses makes them liable to many diseases. I fear the same people would slit the ears of their horses if fashion approved it, as they do the ears of dogs. Queen Victoria has forbidden any of her dogs to be so treated. The tail of a horse is not hair only, any more than a whip is all lash. It is often cut off so close as not only to produce pain and disfigurement, but to

prove a serious injury. And when the handsome horse gets old and can no longer please his owner by a rapid gait or showy action, he is sold off for a trifle, and put to the strain of hard work in an ash cart or an express wagon. Many a horse, if he could tell his story, would move our hearts with what he has had to suffer from youth to old age. I am thankful that we live in an age when attention is called to these things, and when our children learn the pity and tenderness that God would have us exercise toward our fellow creatures. I am thankful that we know something about it in this church and that one of our members has devoted a great deal of time and study to the literature of this subject and to arousing others to its importance. There are many charming books on animals, and science has studied deeply their nature and habits. They are our fellow creatures. The same God made and loves them and would have us love them, too. But children are sometimes cruel. Half in thoughtlessness and half in the love of power, they abuse their humble kindred.

Boys, you know, love to try their strength. A boy is very proud when he can drive, and he likes to order round a dog, or even to stone a cat or a bird. A stray animal finds many enemies and but few friends. If you had lost your way in the city and couldn't get any one to tell you where to go, and if when you came up beseechingly, hoping to find a friendly face, some bigger boy should kick you, and when you ran away throw stones after you, wouldn't you think it hard? Isn't it meaner so to treat a dog or cat which cannot speak?

Birds, too, have a hard time. The caging of birds is a wearisome confinement. I know they are often well treated and happy, and it is pathetic to hear them sing so beautifully even in their narrow cages. But it is hardly a jubilant song; it sounds to me more like a strain of longing and tender complaint. Music itself has been pressed out of sorrow. It is said of the nightingale that "he sings with his breast against a thorn." That may be a fable, but there is always to me a sad appeal in the note of a caged

bird, a tear in his voice, as of a prisoner remembering his home, reminding one of the song of Rebecca in *Ivanhoe*.

Paul and Silas sang praises in the prison, and the caged bird is a lesson of faith in God. I will not say it is wrong to keep birds in that way. Many are born so and never knew anything different and learn to love their human jailers and sometimes have the range of the house, but the same thing used to be said about slaves, and freedom is the cherished boon of everything that lives.

Birds are cruelly treated in many ways; they are shot for sport, and wantonly wounded. And there is a crying evil in making ornaments of their plumage, when it is torn from them roughly or the innocent birds are shot in nesting time, their little ones left to suffer, or if the mate of either escapes, going through an agony of terror and bereavement. Much has been said of these cruelties, and no doubt many tender-hearted women have worn these beautiful ornaments without thinking of the suffering they cost. I believe there is a reform in this respect, and I shall be glad

to help it on. Though it is a dangerous thing to interfere with ladies' bonnets, I must confess that I like the flower-garden fashion much better than that of wearing the plumage of birds. A friend of mine made an address to children lately on the condition of the Indians, and illustrated their degradation by saying that they wore feathers on their heads. Perhaps it was a satire on the cruelty of those who make the poor birds suffer for their pride.

I shall not dwell longer upon the cruelties practised on animals, but proceed, rather, to a pleasanter side of the subject—the debt we owe them. In this age of machinery we forget how much civilization owes to dumb animals. They have been well called “workers without wage.” They have toiled for us from the beginning of the world, and taken their pay more often in blows and ill treatment than anything else. They have ploughed our fields, and cleared the foundations and hauled stone for buildings. They have drawn heavy loads in city and country. They have cleared the land by dragging out roots and rocks half buried in the

earth. Our New England never could have been settled without them. They opened the Western country. They were pioneers. In fact, we might say they helped to the discovery of large territories. The frozen North has been made known to us by the reindeer and the dog. It is thought that Alaska never will be of much use to us unless the reindeer are multiplied. Animals have been a defense in war. In eastern countries, elephants were formed into line and marched or ran forward with resistless force to tread down the enemy.

The horse has, in all ages, been the companion of man in battle. He has shared the pomp of war and the pride of victory. That is as old as the world, and yet true to this very day. One of the most magnificent passages in the Bible is the description of the horse in the book of Job. Carlyle says, "Such living likenesses were never since drawn."

Even to-day we measure everything by horse-power, thus confessing that horse-power has been one of the greatest forces by which progress has been made.

Do you know what a post-office is? All the children know that, but why do we call it a post-office? Because all letters or messages used to be sent by swift riders from one station or post to another, where horses stood saddled to carry the saddle-bags on to the next station. That was the way sixty years ago. Stage-coaches or riders on horseback carried everything, and that is why we say *post-haste* and *postal* card now.

But when we speak of letters and messages, there is a bird that ought to have credit. Do you know what it is? You have all seen the bird a great many times. The dove or pigeon was the first post-office. Noah let the dove out of the ark, and she brought back the second time an olive leaf in her mouth, emblem of peace and hope, and that beautiful fact in the Bible led men to think of sending messages in that way, and so doves, who of all birds love their homes, were trained to be letter-carriers. They would be taken, at first, a few miles from home and let loose where they would easily find the way back; gradually the

distance was increased, until they would learn to find their way even eighty miles. When let loose, the dove would rise to a great height to get a bird's-eye view, as we call it, of the whole country, then she would swiftly wing her way home. Do you think that belongs only to past ages? So late as 1870, in the great war between France and Germany, the telegraph wires were destroyed, the roads were blocked, and messages were sent—how do you think? They were sent by carrier-pigeons. The letters were written and then photographed on thin paper, in type so small that it could only be read with a microscope, and this paper was folded and put into a quill, and tied to the middle feather of the pigeon's tail, because that keeps still, while the other feathers are spread out. So the faithful bird would fly straight home, over hostile armies and besieged towns. One of these pigeons came, bringing news to Paris, and in its poor little body were found grains of shot, by which the sharpshooters had tried to kill her, but

she escaped, and went bravely on to deliver her message.

There are a great many things that I would like to tell the children about animals, but I want you to remember some lessons that we may learn from them. We ought to learn industry. The wise man says, "Go to the ant, thou slug-gard; consider her ways, and be wise." This little creature, whose brain is, Darwin tells us, one quarter the size of a small pin's head, has sagacity more wonderful than that of an elephant. Indeed, the keenness, the curiosity, the imagination and reason displayed are truly marvelous.

The bee is an emblem of industry. When we want our children to do some good and generous work, we call them "Busy Bees," and there are many other industrious animals. When a man is very industrious, we say he works like a beaver.

The animals give us lessons of temperance. In their natural state they are healthy. They avoid things that are bad for them. Animals hate tobacco or liquor.

Darwin tells us that monkeys can be taught to drink, but after being once made drunk, they despise it and refuse to drink again. The dog is a cold water animal. He ought always to have it at hand. The habits of animals are very regular. They like neatness as much as you do. Even the cow and the pig are better for being kept clean. A filthy sty or barn shows a dirty farmer. The animals are temperate and love cold water. The little birds bathe in it with great delight.

Another lesson is that of patience. The animals bear a great deal of hardship without complaint. They do not fret about heat or cold. They make themselves comfortable on plain fare. They try their best to do the work required of them. The patient ox drags a heavy load. The horse is often ambitious to do the best he can. When kindly treated, he will make every effort, and even when the load is too great, he will tug and strain till he seems all exhausted.

You sometimes hear people say, "Lazy as a dog." It is slander. A dog is active,

and loves to run and hunt or work. We sometimes say that a man has *dogged* perseverance, that is, he sticks to his work and will not let go. I never knew what "dogged" means till I spent some months in Germany. All the milk carts are drawn by dogs, and the poor fellows pull their loads from house to house, and are often so hard worked, that when the milkman stops they drop right down from sheer fatigue, but when he has done his errand, up springs the dog at the word, and struggles patiently on to the next place. And what will not the poor dog endure? Read the story of Nansen and of the missionaries to Greenland—how the dogs pull the sledges over the frozen fields, and make the Esquimau's life endurable by their kindly companionship.

And this leads one to speak of animals' affection. They love their offspring, and will even die for them. They often show much kindness to one another, and many of them are very fond of society. Animals and birds are often attached to persons, but the dog is the most remarkable instance of affection for human beings.

Darwin says, "A dog is the only thing on earth that loves you more than he loves himself." The dog is no respecter of persons. He loves a poor man as much as he would a prince. He is just as happy in a hut as he would be in a palace, provided he has love. It is a rather mean saying, that "When poverty comes in at the door love flies out of the window," but it is not so with the dog. He loves on to the end. Landseer has painted the mourning of the shepherd's dog by his master's coffin, and sometimes he has been found stretched in death on his master's grave. It is a beautiful example of God's love manifested in the brute. A friend of mine had a favorite dog that was sick, and though they made every effort to save him nothing could be done. After he had lain insensible for some time, they tried to rouse him by strong salts held to his nose, but he never moved. At last his master gave the low whistle so familiar to happy days, and the poor creature opened his eyes, and looked one glance of love, and then died.

Dr. Horace Bushnell, speaking of the

poor beggar in the parable who lay at the rich man's gate, says that when all others forsook him, he had two kinds of faithful friends, dogs and angels. The dogs comforted his dying hours, and the angels bore him on their wings to heaven. Painting and poetry have drawn most beautiful scenes from animal life. Sir Walter Scott dearly loved dogs, cats, and horses. Not a great many of us think we understand all that Browning has written, but children and everybody else can enjoy "The Pied Piper of Hamelin," or the story of the gallant horse that brought good news to Ghent. And what would the Bible be without animals? What child is there who never loved to play with his Noah's ark? The most beautiful parable in the Old Testament is that of the poor man's ewe lamb, which lay in his bosom and was unto him as a daughter. And when our dear Saviour is brought nearest to us, what is he called? The lamb led to the slaughter, the lamb dumb before his shearer. Yes, and he is the lion, too, the lion of the tribe of Judah, strong and fearing nothing. He is the first born of every

creature, that is, having all the glory and wisdom and beauty that shines upon every living thing, and the Holy Spirit, descending like a dove, after his baptism, abode upon him.

He is the Shepherd and we are his flock. Never call a sheep stupid. There is no stupid animal but man. God's care of us is shown in the care of the animals. If we lived simpler lives obedient to him, we should be far happier.

One of the most remarkable poems in the English language, "The Ancient Mariner," has for its lesson the love of God's creatures.

"He prayeth best who loveth best
All things both great and small,
For the dear God who loveth us
He made and loveth all."

I am glad so much is done to make us more humane. Animals are a great blessing to us. We not only tame them, but they tame us and they make us gentler. Children are better for loving them. Even those we dread have some office to purify the earth and preserve the health

of mankind. If any creatures large or small must be killed, it should be done mercifully, so as not to prolong their sufferings. And while they live we ought to treat them kindly. God loves them, and we should love them too. John Wesley said that if a man was a Christian, his dog and cat would be the better for it. I am not sure that he meant that every Christian ought to keep a dog or cat, but if you do have a kitten, or a dog, or a goat, or a pony, mind you treat them kindly, do not abuse or spoil them.

A cruel boy will grow hard-hearted. He will be cruel to his sisters and perhaps do cruel deeds when he grows up. God save us from cruelty in any form! The dear Saviour was cradled in a manger. He walked among the sheep-folds. He heard the morning song of birds. He said the least of them was dear to his Father in heaven. Let us learn of him, that we may have the like tenderness, that we may never make our pleasure out of anything that brings unhappiness to the humblest of God's creatures.

Parents' Gifts to Their Children

Young minds are not capable of long-continued attention, but they do have many good and serious thoughts. The impressions made upon them are deep and abiding. The mind of childhood is serious and reverent, and does not need trifles nor foolish talk to interest it. I have often been surprised at the clearness with which even a young child would apprehend some thought or fact. And the memory at that age is sharp and retentive. Children were among our Saviour's auditors, and he noticed them and spoke of them and to them. His parables would attract them, while their meaning was deeper than the wisest apprehended. When he taught his disciples the Lord's Prayer, he went on to encourage them to ask often and earnestly, and to show them that God may be trusted to give us the best gifts. "Even parents," he said, "will not give a stone for bread, nor a serpent for a fish."

Some have sought a resemblance in the things here contrasted, giving the Saviour's words more point and emphasis. I do not know whether such resemblance is real, though there may be something in it. "If a son ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone?" The Revised Version reads, "If a son shall ask a loaf." The bread of the Hebrews was baked in round cakes, not unlike flat stones in shape and appearance. There may have been, therefore, a peculiar vividness in the Saviour's question, "Will he give him a stone?"

Again he says, "Or if he ask a fish will he give him a serpent?" There is one species of fish known all over the world that is very like a serpent, and that is an eel. The boys and girls, too, know what an eel is. Even the natural history books admit that the eel is a sort of connecting link between the fish and serpent tribes. Yet the inner structure is very different, and no one would think of taking a serpent for food.

Luke gives a third simile not mentioned in Matthew, "If he shall ask an egg, will

he offer him a scorpion?" A scorpion is a frightful creature of the spider tribe, with claws and a long tail, in which is a dangerous sting. It would seem very unlike an egg. In fact, the black scorpion is utterly unlike an egg in every way, yet Biblical writers say that there is a white scorpion which folds his tail about him and rolls up so closely that he may look not unlike a small egg.

I am not sure about these resemblances, but I am sure about the contrasts. Would a father give his child a scorpion for an egg, or a serpent for a fish, or a stone when he asked for bread? Our dear Lord fastened the truth on his hearers, old and young, with words that could not be forgotten. He shows that God would never deny good gifts to earnest prayer, and yet I see a secondary teaching in these words, to which I wish to call your attention.

Leaving the great subject of prayer which our Saviour made prominent, let us take a thought suggested to us by our relation as parents and children. Let us consider the gifts that parents bestow.

Our gifts are both voluntary and involuntary; that is, some we wish to give, and some we cannot help giving. Perhaps the latter are the more important of the two. They begin earlier; they are more continuous. What we can give our children depends on what we are. If we have a strong and healthy body, a calm mind, physical habits of virtue and sobriety, these things will be apt to descend to the children. The law of heredity is an important one, which scientific men have studied and followed out in many lines, but which is true in history and common life. Every one of us can tell something about it. We know what has come to us from the past, and we see about us daily the family likeness of children to parents, and their habits of speech and movement. The first thing you notice or think of in regard to families or children is this link to other generations. Often in our Sabbath-school I can recognize children by the parents' look, when I should not otherwise know them.

We give our children what we have ourselves. The property we leave them is

small in importance, compared with the properties of soul and body. We read that Abraham gave Isaac all that he had. The meaning, of course, is all his gold and silver and apparel and flocks. But there were other things far greater,—the reverence, the faith, the purity of character. These had their influence, and were to Isaac a richer boon than all his wealth. Yet here we are reminded that the gifts of love are not always good. A man who gives money to his children sometimes ruins them in the gift. He makes them self-indulgent, vicious perhaps, and tempts them in miserable ways. Thus his gift proves a serpent instead of a fish, a scorpion instead of an egg. He thinks to make life pleasant to the child, and turns it into bitterness.

There are many such mistakes made in life. A great deal might be written on the cruelties of love. There are those who bring up their children to be idle, to be ashamed of work, to think they must always be waited on, and never learn to take care of themselves. There are others who awaken the love of finery, and make

their children think always of their dress and their appearance. Others still try to push them on in their studies, as if to get applause was the main object of life. These gifts are not bread. They cannot feed the soul. By and by, languor and disease and morbid vanity take the place of all childlike grace. Some parents cannot deny a child's wish, but seek to gratify it everywhere, giving the child no chance of self-denial, no sense of responsibility. They even leave to children the decision of questions they are not fit to decide. Many years ago, I knew a mother in Massachusetts who was asked if her little boy went to school. She replied, "Oh, no; I asked Horace if he would go to school, but Horace declined."

In some households the parent is less of a master than a slave. The child does not run to do errands for the mother, but the mother for the child; the boy does not rise up to wait on others, or to give them the best chair, but only looks out for himself. The parent is full of love and anxiety, but his gifts fail to bless. There are gifts that minister to amusement and self-indul-

gence, but not to character; the heart is not made better. This is giving stones for bread, and serpents instead of fish. The law of the gospel, "Deny thyself," is a benign law. It is the law of happiness, even of present happiness. A child loves to be useful, he loves to do some work, he can easily be taught to feel that there is more comfort in doing a kind and generous act than in anything else. But some parents forget this. They shield their children from everything hard,—hard tasks, hard lessons, regular rules. They try to make everything easy for them, and thus prepare the way for a soft and weak life.

I was once riding in a railway car with Henry Ward Beecher and his son sitting in the seat before me. The boy was trying to get down the blind to keep the sun off, but he did not understand the spring. The father seemed to pay no attention, and by and by I leaned forward to help the boy. "No! if you please," said the father, "let him find it out for himself; that's my rule." The little fellow worked away at it, and pretty soon he got it down. That boy will be able to take care

of himself when he grows up. The love and respect a parent receives is for the good principles he has taught, and not for the favors he has given.

But some parents make worse mistakes than this. They fear to make religion unpleasant, and therefore they suffer it to be neglected. They have no rules for the Sabbath, no laws about going to church, no suitable reading, no cessation of play at home. The fear of the Lord is not made present in the household, and therefore his love cannot be fully known. The parent himself perhaps does not abstain from secular employments, he does not talk with the child of good things, but rather breaks the impression of them by speaking of the faults of worship, or talking uncharitably of others. The child notices these things, and the spirit of the household enters into his bosom ere we are aware. The faith of childhood is thus early overthrown, and the gifts of parental love are anything but salutary to the soul. The taste for amusements is often fostered too strongly. Children are allowed at an early age to go to places of amusement without the parents. Home is

not made the happiest and brightest place, but money is furnished to save ourselves the trouble of employing the children wisely at home. These indulgences often turn to bitterness. The appetites are stimulated. Plain food is despised. The boy who cannot say "No!" to his appetite, learns to smoke or drink, or worse things, often unknown to the parent. The liberties and money that are given, without a careful account, are no blessing, but a curse.

Are there not parents who give stones for bread, and serpents for fish? The child that learns self-indulgence at home, and to throw off restraint, and the proud disregard of right laws, does he not receive a fearful inheritance? Are there not parents who teach their children to drink, or at least lead the way to this and other vices, of which the Scripture has warned us, "At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder"? Does not the egg sometimes prove a scorpion, and the fish turn out a serpent, and the bread become a stone?

Having thus considered the gifts on the part of parents, and the mistakes often

made, let us look at the misuse of these gifts. The gifts of love are not always rightly received. Children have a great responsibility, as the Bible itself teaches. Commands are addressed to them that they may read themselves, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right." And many solemn warnings are given them, "The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it." The faults of children and parents are very apt to go together. No children are faultless, no parents are perfect. But it is a fearful thing when estrangement comes between them, and love is lost. In the meteor-like career of him who is sometimes called the greatest genius of this century, Lord Byron, nothing is sadder than his alienation from his mother. There was wrong on both sides. He gives us a hint of it himself when he says:

"Untaught in youth my heart to tame,
The springs of life were poisoned."

But it is evident that some responsibility

must be put upon the child; we cannot shield him wholly from wrong or be always by his side. He must go among his companions at school or at play. His character must be formed by contact with them. He must learn gradually to be his own master. He must learn to resist evil. The Germans have a saying, "Who resists not, exists not."

Independence and strength of character can only be won by trial. I say, then, that children have a responsibility for themselves and their use of the opportunities allowed them. They are not only to be obedient and respectful at home, but they are to do right everywhere. They are to show kindness and civility to all.

And one thing I am very glad to say, that I think the children of our times are for the most part very polite in their manners and behavior. It has often been said that they are not so reverent and respectful to age as in former times. I do not believe it. I am often struck with the politeness and good manners of children as I meet them in my daily walks. Scarcely a boy but lifts his hat with as

much grace and courtesy as a gentleman of the old school, and I very rarely, if ever, speak to a child without a friendly and gracious reply. This is no unimportant thing, for good manners are a part of godliness. St. Peter does not fail to admonish us to be *courteous*.

But there are virtues of stouter fiber than this; such as truth, promptness, keeping your promises. Children must learn these by their own effort. Let us impress it on the youngest child, whatever you do, never be afraid to own it. Do not make out a good case for yourself, but tell just what you did. The truth is the best thing in the universe. It is like pure, white light that shows all things as they are. No matter what happens, tell the truth. Truth will always defend itself. Daniel Webster better said: "Truth always fits. Every truth in the world is always in harmony with every other truth, while falsehoods never agree."

Be prompt, keep your word. If we can teach our children anything, let it be justice, honor, self-respect. "Oh," but you say, "this is not religion." I tell you

it is religion. When a child feels that he must own the truth, and goes and says to his mother, "I did so and so that was wrong," there begins repentance. I thank God for a mother and a father who taught me to tell the truth, and if I have ever had any piety it began right there, that I could not lie down at night without confession, and then my mother pointed me to Jesus, whose love taketh away our sins. And now, again, on this matter of responsibility. Every child must feel that if he would have a good character he has something to do for others, and an account to render to God. And that is in part the reason why some, very carefully brought up, have failed in the race of life, and others less favored have done well.

I have known widows left with the care of a young family, in poverty, perhaps, as well as loneliness, and I have watched and wondered to see how character was formed and strength and patience grew together. The boy has learned to say: "I must take care of mother; she has no one else to look out for her. I must help

mother, and I must not do what will bring tears to her sad eyes. Nay, I must wipe away those tears and bring smiles by doing right." And so boys and girls would go to work and help, and grow strong with that beautiful seriousness that you sometimes see in a child, more beautiful than anything on this earth, for it is like that divine seriousness that the old painters give to the face of the infant Jesus.

We are to teach children their responsibility. There is something to do in life, a character to be formed. It is not always to be taking gifts carelessly, but to use them, and, above all, to feel that the best gifts are principle, self-denial, and truth. Freedom the child must have in some degree, but he must be taught to use it. Money, pleasure, and gifts in many forms, he must have, but the child, too, must see to it that he does not turn them into evil. When the parent gives bread, the child is not to turn it into a stone, nor the fish into a serpent, nor the egg into a scorpion. The bitterest thing a man can remember in old age, is to think, "My parents gave me love and indulgence and tried to make me

happy, but I turned the gifts into evil, and departed from virtue and truth, until the memory of it bites like a serpent and stings like an adder."

Thus the child is to work with the parent, and both have their duties and are to be helpers to one another in the great work of life.

This line of thought, like every other approach to the subject of home influence, teaches us the importance of early impressions. Children learn very rapidly. They get a great part of education before they go to school. Their memories are stored with things they hear, and their words and gestures are copied from those about them. Are you waiting, parent, in the hope that by and by character will burst out all of a sudden, that the faults of childhood can be brushed away at a stroke, and no stain of them be left? Never was a greater mistake. We are bidden to train our children for the kingdom of heaven, not to wait and expect heaven to open as it did on Paul, and turn a cruel man into a saint. God often has mercy on bad men whose parents have led them into

error. But our business is, if possible, to keep our children from error. And we may do it, by God's help. We see what training can do, when we look at a child well brought up, taught, grounded in good principles, and led onward in the way of right; and then look at the poor inmates of our reform school, boys and girls often with good minds and fair faces and strong limbs; but they have been neglected at home. Nine out of ten of them come from drunken, swearing parents, or from those who have given them only the education of the street. But even these may be reclaimed by judicious care.

The best training you can give a brute leaves him but a brute still. The scorpion is a scorpion and the serpent a serpent. But the child made in God's image can be trained by his help to goodness, faith, and love. All the energies of our hearts and minds should be devoted to this sacred office.

There is a wonderful receptivity in the child. I do not believe that children are born holy and good, nor do I believe that they keep entire innocence very long,

but this I do believe, that they are early receptive to God's grace. It may touch their hearts from infancy. It is an old fancy that when a baby smiles in sleep, the angels are whispering to him, but it is no fancy that God may send the Holy Spirit in ways that we know not; and if we believe this how tenderly should we desire to work with God and to breathe an honest and pure influence about the child at all times! We know that the foundations of health or disease are laid in infancy. Why not of character? If we are prayerful and devout, the child will catch the spirit.

A father told me the other day how his little boys would gather around him at the family altar, and even the tottering baby of two years old would drop down on his knees, not willing to be outdone by the rest. May God multiply such homes, where fear of God and love of truth and righteousness are taught, where self-help is always joined with the love of helping others, where to fear God and keep his commandments is the law of daily life! Here is a hymn from the land of

Luther which I was reading this morning,
and I know the children will love it,
because they love poetry:

“O happy home, where thou art loved the best,
Dear Friend and Saviour of our race,
Where never comes such welcome, honored Guest,
Where none can ever fill thy place!

“O happy home, where man and wife in heart,
In faith and hope are one,
That neither life nor death can ever part,
The holy union here begun!

“O happy home, whose little ones are given
Early to thee in faith and prayer,
To thee, their friend, who from the heights of heaven
Guards them with constant care!

“O happy home, where little voices,
Their glad hosannas love to raise,
And childhood's lisping tongue rejoices
To bring new songs of love and praise,

“Where each one serves the meek and lowly
Whatever thine appointment be,
Till common tasks seem great and holy
When they are done as unto thee!”

God bless you, parents and children,
brothers and sisters, and all who have
care or prayer for little ones. God bless

you all, and grant that you may so serve him with such an honest, simple life, and such desire to do good that all about you may catch the spirit, and that we may all come together unto the home above, saying, "Here am I and the children whom thou hast given me."

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